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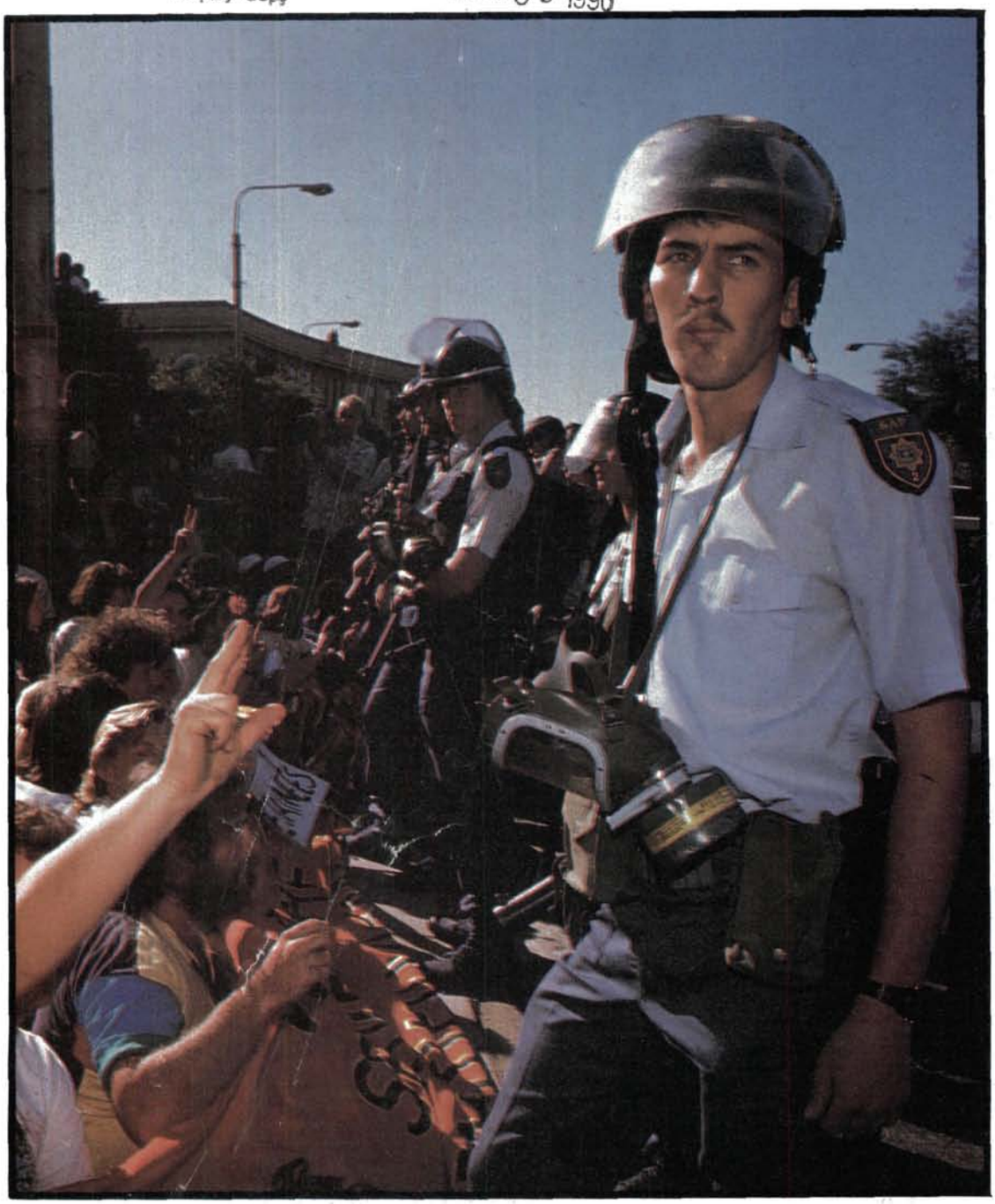

Out of adversity; the wives of the Birmingham Six

Christa Wolf: a major interview with Germany's greatest writer

Public Enemy give hiphop street cred

A loyal servant

Will the police follow Mandela —or back the neo-fascists?

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A NEW PARTY FOR NEW TIMES?

Britain's Communist Party has welcomed the democratic revolutions of Eastern Europe. With a long record of opposing abuses of human and civil rights committed in the name of socialism, we shed no tears for the demise of these despotic regimes.

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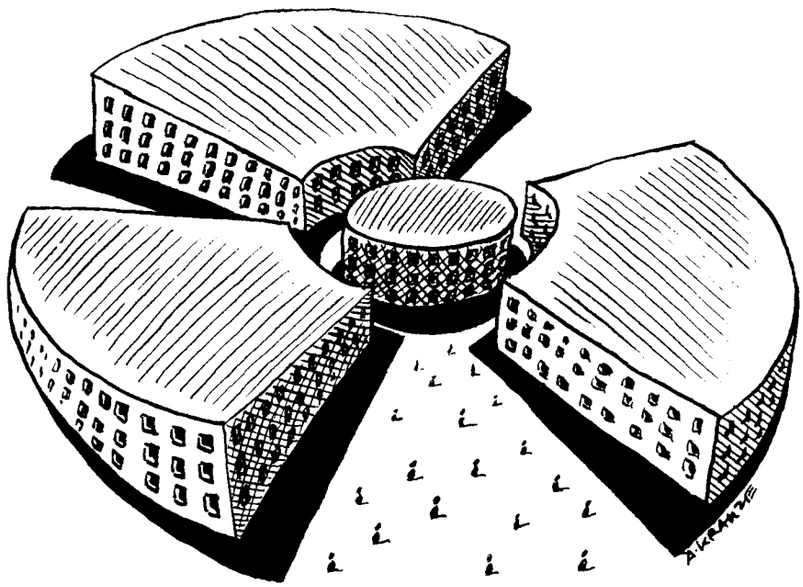
EDITORIAL

Nuclear families

Radiation risks are multiplying. It's time people made their voices heard



Andrzej Krauze

In 1947, two papers from the Medical Research Council opened and closed the debate on the genetic effects of radiation upon workers in the nuclear industry. "All quantitative experiments show that even the smallest doses of radiation produce a genetic effect, there being no threshold below which no genetic effect is induced," said one. "There will be no means of showing whether the abnormalities in the child were due to the occupational exposure of the parent," concluded the other.

Enough children of nuclear workers have now died of leukaemia and cancers of the lymph system to prove the second scientist wrong. But already the nuclear industry has moved to block pressures for compensation in the wake of last week's Gardner report which found an excess of leukaemia cases among the children of Sellafield workers. Further studies are necessary, says BNFL, but perhaps not now into the insulting theory it was lately propagating that incomers into the isolated area around Sellafield brought with them an unknown virus which infected with cancers a local population which had no natural immunity.

Meanwhile, children who live around Sellafield are developing cancers at ten times the national average, compared with a rate five times the national average at Dounreay, and nearly twice at Burghfield and Aldermaston. Environmental exposures, in other words, are wreaking their toll too.

We are rightly concerned about these local effects, but Britain's nuclear installations belong to an international order which is polluting the whole planet, not only with the shortlived radioactive leakages which damage local people, but long-lived radionuclides that accumulate in the global environment and deliver most of their dose in the far future. Calculations by the International Commission on Radiological Protection indicate that 4,000 people will die, and over 2,500 will be born with genetic defects, as a result of the nuclear power generated in 1980—though over millions of years. Every additional year of generation at the 1980 level will cause another 4,000 deaths and 2,500 genetic defects.

These conservative ICRP extrapolations are based on estimates of the radioactivity released at Hiroshima which have since proved to be wrong. New calculations by scientists at the US Lawrence Livermore Laboratory indicate that the risks are four times higher than the ICRP figures suggest. Other calculations put the risks higher still. The simple fact is that, as Catherine Caufield's study *Multiple Exposures* shows, official figures derive ultimately from crude historic guesstimates and are continually being revised to catch up with the real risks. Apparently precise measures, rendered as *mSv* for individuals, or person-rems for populations, are effectively *bl-SHt*.

Britain's nuclear establishment has anyway displayed a pretty cavalier attitude towards such risks. For example, the designer of the Sellafield reprocessing plant informed an international conference in 1958 that "in general terms, the intention has been to discharge fairly substantial amounts of radioactivity (into the Irish Sea) as part of a deliberate scientific experiment ..." Lord Hinton, once Britain's chief nuclear engineer, has described how mathematical models, themselves inevitably imprecise, showed that the local population would be put at risk by the construction of the Dounreay fast-breeder reactor:

> This was easily put right; with the assumption of a 99 per cent containment the site was unsatisfactory, so we assumed, more realistically, a 99.9 per cent containment, and by doing this we established that the site was perfect.

Britain's nuclear history is littered with official lies, mistaken and false estimates, leakages, accidents—and an extraordinary self-confidence. The public has been kept deliberately in the dark on the notion that we are too emotional to be trusted to make up our own minds about the nuclear commitments which our masters have made on our behalf.

For years, in fact, misguided and dangerous policies have been sheltered not only by official secrecy, but by the normal discretions of our scientific and medical establishments too. The few individuals who questioned the official consensus were dismissed and ridiculed as cranks. The press and television—with the glorious exception of Yorkshire Television's James Cutler and his colleagues—Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and the trade unions, all of which are supposed to play their part in the "checks and balances" of our unwritten constitution, have largely shown the deference to received wisdoms which is expected of them.

If the tide is now turning, it is the dogged suspicions of ordinary people that we have to thank; and it is surely time for them to grasp the right to decide upon these and similarly momentous decisions which are taken in their name.

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Dawn raiders

The press have had a few problems coming to terms with Dawn and Jeff, parents of the snatched baby, Alexandra. Dawn has not lived up to her early promise as a pretty innocent blonde—and Jeff has gone right off the rails.

After 17 days of agony and good copy, Dawn got her baby back. She then, rather admirably, played the press at their own game and sold her story to the *News of the World*, with the *Sun* getting its weekly share. The stories on the couple changed. "She wouldn't have got that baby back if it wasn't for us," cried one reporter. There is nothing so vicious as a jilted press.

Papers excluded from the deal dug deep. The *Mirror* ran a front page special on Jeff's less publicised extra-marital progeny: "He's my Dad too!" said young Karen. "I have never had a penny in maintenance from Jeff," said Karen's mum. The *Sun* ran Jeff's denial: "It's all a wicked smear"—he was in a detention centre at the time. Nevertheless, it ran Jeff's "Jail Shame" story, involving an extensive list of felonies. But resolution followed the next day: Jeff had turned into a Jeffrey and popped the question to Dawn, "I have learned my responsibilities. Baby comes first".

If only we could have left it there. Latest reports are that Jeff has beaten Dawn up. But in a bizarre article in the *Sun*, whose reporters appear to have interviewed Dawn and Jeff in the bath, Dawn denied accusing Jeff of assault, and "stood up starkers, saying: 'Look, there's no mark on me.'"

As Dawn and Jeff valiantly resist the tabloids' undignified efforts to fit them into a respectable mould and, failing that, smear them, another young mother has had her baby snatched. It was from her estranged boyfriend's car. The young woman has since miscarried the twins she was carrying. She's black, the father has been interviewed by the police, the story is complicated. The press, those valiant retrievers of babies, have not yet given the story the same prominence. They can't afford another false Dawn.

John Browne's bodies

Everyone—from the Winchester Tories to the *Sun* ("A Right B'Stard")—agrees that John Ernest Douglas de la Valette Browne, Tory MP for Winchester and Riyadh, ought to resign his Westminster seat. Whether he will do so is another matter. Mr Browne will soon experience the friendlessness he deserves, but party managers can also spot a tricky by-election prospect. He may yet survive to face a reselection meeting.

This latest row over members' interests raises more questions than the fate of Mr Browne. If his ex-wife hadn't played dirty and leaked the information to a journalist, would this scandal have ever come to light? Why don't the papers who rejoice in Browne's downfall ever set their newshounds onto people like him, instead of snooping on the bedroom secrets of television stars?

But the more serious point is this: the complaints against Browne are for failing to declare his interests, rather than having those "interests" in the first place. Does this mean that if he'd been upfront about his business affairs, the select committee would have said "OK, John, fair enough"? Browne's above-board interests fill a page in the register. It will be fascinating to see which members defend Mr Browne's right to enrich himself in the forthcoming Commons debate on the issue.

The answer seems to be twofold. First, pay MPs a market rate (how about comparability with, say, local authority chief executives?). Second, stop them representing outside interests. We must distinguish between freelance journalism (legitimate) and consultancies (illegitimate). But in politics, as in life, you get what you pay for.

Power to the people

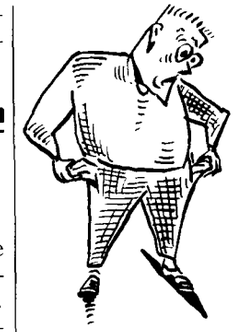
In Britain opinion polls largely tell us what we could have guessed: homebuyers resent being crippled by ever-increasing mortgage repayments—obvious stuff like that. But in eastern Europe they are an entirely new phenomenon, articulating the views of millions of citizens silenced for decades. Last month the Prague Sociological Institute conducted a poll designed to assess political attitudes and psephological trends in the run up to the June elections, and found that only 8.1 per cent in the Czech lands and 6.4 percent in Slovakia would vote for the Communist Party. Western pundits blithely dismiss this as a predictable backlash against totalitarian communism, and read into it a simple, unquestioned endorsement of multi-party democracy as the political cure-all.

But communism is not the only casualty of recent events. Party politics and state power *per se* have lost their credibility. The street demonstrations of Prague, Leipzig and Warsaw by the citizens of eastern Europe reclaiming their role as political agents proved that sovereignty resides ultimately with the people. They will not surrender this agency easily to a political system which defines them as passive entities, and which interposes a bureaucratic intermediary—the political party—between citizens and their ideals. In Czechoslovakia the broad-based non-party movements now find themselves in the uneasy position of potential electoral candidates. Having mobilised popular dissent, should they now mutate into political parties seeking to rule over those same people? Many features of the popular critique of the one-party system also apply to a multi-party system. Both deny citizens any real autonomy or meaningful role in government. The revolution may not be over yet.

School ties

Just occasionally, the Tories do something that's genuinely both radical and sensible, which makes one wonder why no previous government, left, right, or centre, had tried it. So it is with the educational reform package announced this week for Northern Ireland. Separate schooling for Protestants and Catholics in the province, though not the *cause* of sectarian hatred, has been among its most potent support mechanisms. The fact that the "state sector" in education means the Protestant sector has, more than any other single factor, made the state itself in many eyes still a Protestant one. So Brian Mawhinney's programme of positive support for integrated schools, including 100 per cent funding for their teaching costs, is of utmost political importance, and wholly welcome.

Unfortunately there is already bitter local opposition to it; and ironically but unsurprisingly it is coming mostly from the Catholic hierarchy—which would, it seems, rather see "their" community perpetually underprivileged than surrender even part of their apparatus of social control. The integrated sector in Northern Ireland is still tiny—about 0.7 per cent of pupils—but the government's measures should now help it grow fast. This will be to everyone's benefit; but Catholics, as citizens if not as churchgoers, stand to gain most. Their senior clergy must eventually realise and embrace that fact.



On Tuesday Mrs Thatcher announced her latest move in the poll tax war. The government would publish figures showing what the rates would have been had it not been for the "community charge", thus pinning the blame for the whole thing on the Labour Party. Bang on cue, the *Sun* ran a lead story on Wednesday: "Rates: £499, Poll tax: £3,520. Family of eight get a shock bill from Labour." "It always seems to be us poor who get clobbered," remarked Mrs Chittock of Socialist Ipswich. It is hard to see how this progaganda benefits the government: if the council had stuck to the DoE expenditure guidelines the story would have been: "Rates £499, Poll Tax £2,224." And Mrs Chittock would have been in clover, wouldn't she?

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LETTERS

Language and meaning

Maria Manning has written an informative and entertaining article about children using black English in the playground ("The kids are lippy", 16 February). But I am afraid her perspective is very insular, and what she casually calls English needs to be taken in a wider perspective. More than 33 countries use "English" as an "intranational" means of communication. In countries as different as India and Zimbabwe, Israel and Malaysia, it is the non-native linguafranca. In the United States some 33 million Afro-Carribbean citizens use "English" as their native language; and a further 300 million people in five major nations, including the United States, also do so.

In other words, English is less and less the property of a small country; less and less a tool of class or a matter of geography. To talk of "standard" English with such a perspective is laughable. In all these countries English has its own differing rhythms and usages, and black English, as the US poet and essayist June Jordan has shown, has a syntax and rules all of its own. Black children growing up here learn a variant of black English, be it Jamaican or another only to find that its authenticity is denied when they go to school and thereafter in their lives in this country.

White kids who employ black English as a playground argot may drop it whenever they choose. Black kids who drop it relinquish aswell something of themelves and of their own culture. I do not have much hope of Britain developing into a genuine multi-cultural society, but it won't do so unless the power and beauty of black English are recognised and can take their place alongside "standard" English.

Phillis Henry
Finchley Road
London NW11

All Europeans

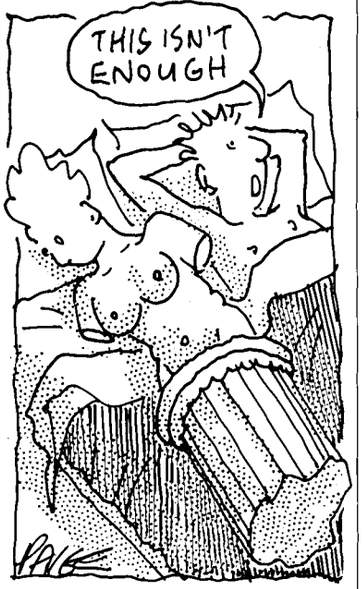
Stephen Shellard's letter "A federal Europe", (9 February) raised as many questions as it answered, but his concern for the "integrity of existing nation states" is clear.

He need not fear that the European Parliament—whether by simple majority or by a two-thirds majority, as he recommends—will detract from national identity. It is precisely in the European Parliament that elected representatives from all 12 member states can express their national, their political and their European convictions.

Reading, or better still, attending their debates would convince your correspondent that you can perfectly well be British and European, just as others can be French, German, Luxembourgian and European as well.

Martyn Boyd
European Parliament
UK Information Office
2 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H

Women are the losers



There are many layers to the Peregrine Worsthorne/Andrew Neil conflict, but the two men have one thing in common which your editorial has not commented on ("All Greek to us", 2 February). They both exploit women.

Ever since the Trojan War, men have been using women as objects around which to shape and justify their own struggles for ascendancy. The outcome of these struggles is often unclear, but one thing is certain: women are the losers.

Should we award the honours to Perry or Andy, the *Sunday Telegraph* or *Sunday Times*, old or new Toryism? We're not sure, but there is one person who is definitely not going to get any, and that is Pamella Bordes.

I don't have a great deal of sympathy for Ms Bordes, but she has only been doing what countless women over the ages have felt the need to do. She has been using her sexuality as a means of access to wealth and power, things that in our society are still largely controlled by men. Andrew Neil is being naive when he says that he wasn't aware that Ms Bordes was a call-girl. Doesn't he know that when beautiful young women go to bed with ugly but powerful middle-aged men, they occasionally do it because they like them. But mostly they do it for other reasons.

Sue Blundell
Goodge Street
London W1

Second division justice

I was interested to read the article by your unnamed Police Officer "A fair cop?" (2 February) The officer feels a justifiable grievance that criticism of the police in particular cases should be used to tarnish the image of police officers in general. As a solicitor who has not represented any "top criminals", I resent the suggestion that I just "go through the motions" for my clients.

Your officer works entirely with "high-profile" cases and it is my concern that these cases shape the law to too great an extent, both in legal precedent and then conversely anecdotally in influencing legislation. The clearest example of the latter trend is the debate on the "right to silence". The anecdotes are all about "ambush defences" in "high-profile" cases but the effects of any change will be felt most acutely in the day-to-day investigation of minor matters where there will be far greater pressure to "confess".

In "minor" cases there are often breaches of the Codes of Practice but magistrates are nowhere near as amenable to the exclusion of evidence as are Crown court judges and the example of the custody record would be unlikely to invoke the discretion.

There are two types of justice and if justice is stricter in "hard cases" it is simply because these are more visible. Even in the cases of serious crime, however, many miscarriages of justice have resulted from one of the "petty boys" being suspected of a crime that was out of their league and they then got their usual "second-division" treatment.

S P Tollyfield
Madeira Villas
Devon

NACRO

Jolyon Jenkins' article on the Manhattan Court Employment Project ("Manhattan transfer", 2 February) is interesting and informative.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that it begins with the astonishing fiction that the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders changed "Rehabilitiation" to "Resettlement" in its title "in recognition of the fact (that) there is nothing much anyone can do to stop criminals being criminals".

There has been no change in NACRO's title, which has contained the word "Resettlement" ever since we were established in 1966. Nor have we ever accepted the defeatist idea that little can be done to divert offenders from crime.

On the contrary, our experience shows that services meeting offenders' needs for accommodation, employment, training and education can greatly reduce their chances of reoffending.

Vivien Stern
Director
NACRO
169 Clapham Road
London SW9 0PU

Editor's note: Perhaps Vivien Stern should inform her press officer as both "fictions" came from her.

Divide and rule

Chinua Achebe's thesis "Denial of presence" ("The song of ourselves", 9 February) which I would have loved to call "Absence of presence" is indeed very original. In fact, I find in this a completely new way of reassessing any colonial past including that of India. But I cannot altogether agree with the universality of his statement "It is simply not true that the English forced us to learn their language". As far as colonial India is concerned English was forced upon it as the official language in 1853 while the East India Company was in command, that is to say even before Queen Victoria officially became the monarch of India. It must be remembered that the pluralistic nature of British colonies needed one official language and the aspiring people of the colonies had to learn it if they wished to progress or remain in the higher echelon of the colonial society.

But after decades of mono-

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linguistic (English in the colonies of various tongues) practices, and easy expertise shown by many natives, the colonial power became frightened. They found that the governance of the colonies was actually easier when there were ethnic and linguistic diversities.

Fazlul Alam
Department of Cultural Studies
University of Birmingham
Birmingham

Bitches and martyrs

It was with delight and disgust I read Sally Vincent's article ("Ready for romance", 9 February). Her mewling moan about these dreadful modern young gals who would rather do their own thing than help men with theirs! Oh, shameless hussies!—brazen wantons! Don't they know they were put on this earth to serve?

Helping a man get his "head" together seems to have become the respectable post-feminist replacement for making him a cup of tea; personally, I'd rather make the tea. It's quicker, and leaves more time for oneself, and important things like the getting of wisdom and the having of fun. Or do such desires finger me as an unrepentant Thatcheristi?

What is it with these sixties women—haven't they learned yet how men take advantage of women's pathetic socialised desire to be approved of? I would ask Vincent to replace the words "man" and "woman" with "boss" and "worker", or "Boer" and "black South African"; doesn't look so cosy now, does it, the oppressed "helping" the oppressor with his "problem" about giving up his privileges. Or are things different in the realm of the personal? But isn't this a variation on a man's home being his castle? And weren't women of *my* generation told by Miss Vincent's that the personal *is* political?

Myself, I put it down to toilet training—you clean up one mess for them, and they expect it all their lives. Well, Vincent can spend the rest of her days catering to the moral incontinence of men if she so pleases —though she shouldn't have any illusions about men *preferring* such docile creatures; believe me, I know, they'll choose a bitch over a martyr every time—but my generation will not, and the next generation of whom she writes so sneeringly even less so.

In the end, isn't this the eternal moan of old women to young women —be more *feminine*. Barbara Cartland's very big on it, too. And it's just a form of envy; of wishing to impose on young women the restrictions you had to fight yourselves. But it still stinks.

Never, until men are *forced* to take responsibility for their own actions and the world they have made from them, will they stop blaming women for everything from the fall from Eden to the rape of daughters. Vincent's there-there indulgence does *none* of us any favours—men as much as women.

Get some guts about you, girl.

Julie Burchill
London

Sally Vincent replies: Ms Burchill, or disgusted of Barnsbury, as she sometimes terms herself, is clearly a dedicated, even compulsive, contributor to correspondence columns. However, on this occasion she seems to have put the wrong letter in her envelope as her effort bears no relation to anything I have written here or elsewhere.

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards

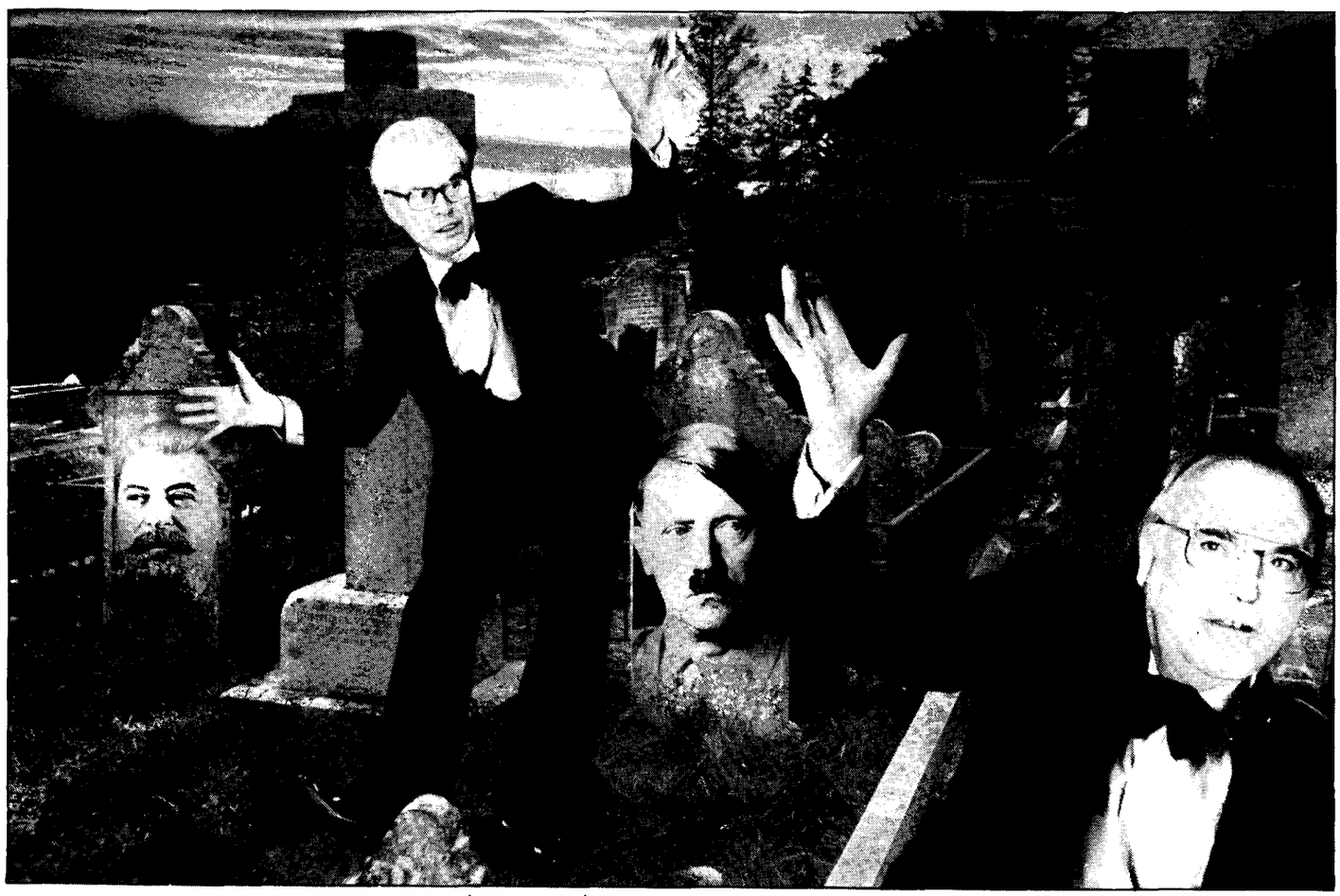
● Martin Ritchie found bonds worth £4m and returned them to the brokers, Rowe and Pitman, who made pre-tax profits of over £100m last year. Mr Ritchie, who has a £2,500 overdraft, received a bottle of champagne for his trouble.—*Sunday Correspondent* (S S Chahal)

● Recruit instructor Corporal Richard Lemmon said: "Colour has not cropped up as a problem in this regiment."

Corporal Gordon Muirhead, another instructor, says blacks are treated the same as other recruits: "It is up to them, as long as they do the job the same. Blacks make good soldiers except they can't swim."—*Guardian* (Michael Meadowcroft)

● British Rail Chairman Sir Robert Reid has told off a conductor for admitting to passengers that overcrowding was a "disgrace".

He [said] similar remarks by BR employees were exploited by some of the popular press.—*Daily Express* (George Moor)



Eine Kleine Ghost Music

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DIARY

Sean French

I wasn't going to write about the release of Nelson Mandela because I assumed that everyone, except for South Africa's extreme right-wing, agreed about it. But the various responses I have seen proved me quite wrong.

I felt that the live television broadcast of the release provided the most extraordinary moment in broadcasting since the moon landing in 1969. We've become used to the proliferation and availability of images. But by forbidding any photographs of Nelson Mandela in prison, the South African authorities had turned him into something between a ghost, a myth and an idea. The moment when these abstract ideas were resolved into one man was a startling emotional experience.

I found his Cape Town speech on the same day even more impressive. At the centre of overwhelming passions, Mandela chose to make a deliberately dry statement, laying out his political position with a lawyer's clarity. I'd always been slightly resistant to the Mandela *prison myth, but it was this, his press conference* on the Monday and his Soweto speech on the Tuesday, that really won me over.

Commentators wrote that he had been unchanged by his time in prison but that is surely untrue. It was as if his enforced absence had burned away everything that was unnecessary: rhetoric, sentimentality, empty gestures and assertions, the courting of easy applause, taunting of opponents, the toleration of indiscipline in comrades. He seemed to have emerged with nothing but a sense of what was necessary: in the short term, to establish a basis for negotiation by securing the authority of the ANC and his status within it.

This was just my reading of the events, but it seemed to me at the time fairly uncontroversial and also unparalleled, even among the extraordinary events of the last six months in eastern Europe.

A large portion of the British public disagreed with me. During Sunday afternoon the BBC switchboard was jammed with complaints from viewers protesting that coverage of Mandela's speech had interrupted the edition of the *Antiques Roadshow*. Many letters were also sent to BBC radio complaining about the time given to the release on regular news broadcasts.

More predictably, perhaps, Garry Bushell, the television critic of the *Sun*, complained about the live TV time given to this "old Marxist". The only Nelson he was interested in, he proclaimed, was the one who was killed at Trafalgar.

It's been grimly amusing that while F W De Klerk and Pik Botha have been praising Mandela's statesmanship, it has been left to Bruce Anderson, the political commentator of the *Sunday Telegraph*, to denounce Mandela, the ANC and the South African Communist Party, "which is far closer to the Albanian Communist Party than to Mr Gorbachev." It's reminiscent of the final days of Richard Nixon's presidency, when English commentators like Bernard Levin were defending him after even his own supporters had given up on him.

I was most surprised by the response in this week's *Sunday Independent*. In his television review, Mark Lawson wrote a comic piece about the efforts of the BBC and ITV commentators to fill the time before Mandela's delayed exit from Victor Verster prison. In his political column, Neal Ascherson was equally mocking. In an argument that was not entirely intelligible, Ascherson concentrated on Mandela's supposed "re-entry problems". He described Mandela as "no great orator... an amazing contrast to the style of black South African oratory to which we have grown accustomed: to the wild, impromptu rhetoric of Allan Boesak or Archbishop Desmond Tutu which jumps freely from satire to tantrum." Isn't that a good thing, or do we want Africa's leading black politician to live down to a racial stereotype?

Our perceptions seem to have been corrupted. We are used to historical events that are carefully stage-managed so that they fit in with the television schedules. And we judge politicians not by what they say but the emotion they communicate: that characteristic break in the voice of Ronald Reagan, the caring rhetoric of Neil Kinnock, the steel of Margaret Thatcher.

Bruce Anderson unarguably observed that the release of Nelson Mandela was not the Second Coming. Thanks to the events of the last few days, I suspect that even the Second Coming won't be covered live by the BBC, unless the Messiah arrives strictly on time.

I'm on the hunt nowadays for examples of innumeracy in the press, and my latest example comes from the current issue of *Harpers and Queen*. In a drooling piece on Europe's wealthiest women, Michael Maconochie describes a Swedish millionairess as follows:

"She left Sweden with the equivalent of £89 million, and shrewd investment since 1984 has pushed the total close to the £100 million mark." Maconochie gives her total current worth as £95 million. According to my own rough calculations, that represents an annual growth of about one and a quarter per cent, which, with inflation, presumably leaves her less well-off than she was in 1984.

I think Eva Larson should rap her shrewd investment advisers hard over the knuckles and put her money in the building society. And Michael Maconochie should go and buy a calculator.

I've heard in the last week of two magazine editors resigning in order to write novels—Charles Moore of *The Spectator* and Paul Keers of *GQ*, a prospect, incidentally, that reminds me of a suggestion—was it by Clive James?—that the Arts Council should give grants to people *not* to write novels, with a regular stipend being given to someone who was proposing not to write a sequence of novels.

The turnover in journalism now seems to have attained the state of perpetual motion. And staying doggedly in one place, as has been my own strategy where possible, is no protection either because the journals that employ you change so rapidly around any given still point that in Einsteinian terms it is actually at high speed.

We're all McDonalds workers of one kind or another nowadays. It's just that some of us don't get a uniform.

ROGER WODDIS

You can't win them all

On the eve of the Nicaraguan general election

"Mr President, we have a problem."
The aide looked grave and rubbed his brow.
"The current backyard situation
Looks bad in Nicaragua now:
Come Sunday, there could be a verdict
The US simply can't allow."

When faced with such a gloomy forecast,
It's hard to have a lovely day.
"Democracy depends on dollars,"
The President tapped his pending tray.
"Where are the bucks we paid to the contras?
What's happened to the CIA?"

The aide said, "Sir, we banked on winning,
But we've been losing all along.
Ortega runs a two-bit country,
America is rich and strong—"
The President sighed, "I know the story.
OK, so what the hell went wrong?"

Six hundred of the world's observers
Declare the poll is not a fraud;
But while the poor and huddled masses
Hear Lady Liberty applaud,
The President is more pragmatic:
"I guess she's just another broad."

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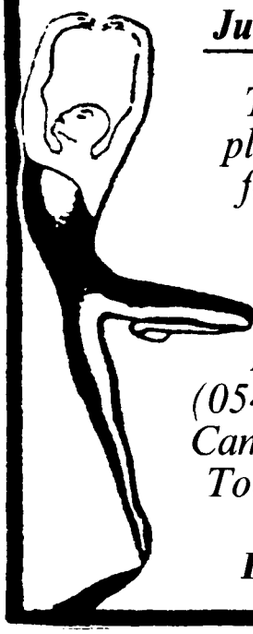

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Right side of the law

The police are being ordered off the frontline of apartheid. But will they obey—or join the neo-fascists, asks Shaun Johnson

Afrapix/Network

Johannesburg

From beneath the statue of Boer leader Paul Kruger, Eugene Terre Blanche bellowed in a voice that carried well beyond the boundaries of Pretoria's Church Square. The leader of the Afrikaner Weerstands Beweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement) was for once looking over, and not directly at, the heads of the few thousand khaki-clad followers who had gathered to hear him speak at Afrikanerdom's shrine.

He was addressing himself directly to the hundreds of white South African riot policemen who ringed the outskirts of the square as a strong, if slightly distant, presence. Most stood impassively in their blue riot gear, cradling their weapons, but some fidgeted nervously.

"Month by month this government has impoverished you [policemen]," said Terre Blanche, exploiting the remarkable, chilling cadence of his gruff voice to the full. "Black bullets have drunk enough [of your] blood... now this blood could be the higher fuel for the revolution we must fight."

It was a blazing Saturday afternoon in the heart of the Transvaal, and Terre Blanche had decided it was time to begin testing the loyalty of South Africa's police to a government which had just performed a political somersault, legalising the resistance movements against whom the security forces had been fighting for decades.

Their very presence at the square was symbolic of the startlingly brisk pace of change. They were there to restore order should the white demonstrators get out of hand. Stripped of euphemism, Terre Blanche's call was for defection. The "bangbroek" ("scaredy-pants") government was emasculating the force, said Terre Blanche, drawing raucous laughter from the crowd when he scorned President de Klerk's decision to replace the intimidating "Casspir" armoured vehicles in the townships with more "user-friendly" panel vans. "If the blacks don't stone them [the vans]," he said, "they'll steal them." He wanted his Afrikaner brothers to come back to their kin, adding the caveat that should they, however, choose to act against the AWB, they would meet with forcible resistance.

Terre Blanche and his neo-fascist followers are a side-show, albeit a profoundly dangerous one, in the unfolding South African drama. But his appeal to the police was a serious political intervention. Political groups ranging from the AWB to the ANC are making overtures to these key figures within South African society.

Already the so-called "respectable face" of the right wing, Dr Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party opposition, has claimed that nearly two-thirds of the 66,237 members of the South African Police (SAP) support the party. It is a contention with which both former Democratic Party stalwart Helen Suzman and, reportedly, ousted State President P W Botha, agree.

Now, having had a virtual free rein to act against the anti-apartheid opposition—to the extent of enjoying immunity against prosecution under the State of Emergency—the police

Terre Blanche: "Black bullets have drunk enough blood . . ."

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are being called upon to transform themselves. De Klerk has ordered them, in effect, to become instantly "depoliticised". Whereas the rubric under which the police operate has for some time centred on what academic observers characterise as "suppression" and "criminalisation" (the latter referring to the technique of equating "political" with "common" crimes), its focus is henceforth to be "accommodation".

In a specially convened meeting with police officers last month, de Klerk all but conceded that previous Nationalist administrations had encouraged the process of criminalisation: now, he said, it was time to "return politics to the politicians". He faces a gargantuan task in doing so. Morale in the force is at its lowest ebb in the SAP's 77-year history. There are on average 12 resignations per day. Spokesmen cite poor pay and bad working conditions—both true in themselves, with a constable having the equivalent of 0 levels and six months' experience earning about £2,400 per year—but it goes much deeper than that.

Many policemen, particularly the majority in the lower ranks, feel deceived and beleaguered. Although they still enjoy enormous powers, the government is increasingly curtailing their latitude. Platoons are ordered to stand back as protestors march through the city streets; erstwhile "criminal offences" ranging from contravening the Group Areas Act to topless sunbathing are no longer the objects of prosecution—although the statutes are still in force. Moreover, there is a sense of aggrievement at the government's decision to probe the recent "hit squad" allegations: if the security police, the élite corps of the SAP, are being subjected to a witch-hunt, so the reasoning goes, how long will it be before we are scapegoated?

A policeman helped a man hang the ANC flag on a police jeep

Already there are signs of maverick action by policemen still on the force. Few could fail to notice that while Cape Town police showed admirable restraint in monitoring Nelson Mandela's welcoming rally, Transvaal police have been extremely heavy-handed when dealing, for example, with anti-cricket tour demonstrators.

After interviewing National Sports Congress leader Krish Naidoo outside the Wanderers cricket ground recently, I was stopped in the street by a belligerent policeman: *"hoekom praat jy met die bobejaane* (Why are you talking to the baboons?)" he snarled. How different this was to the remarkable image in the Cape when a demonstrator, overjoyed at the news of the ANC's unbanning, tried to hang a black, green and gold flag on a police jeep. Instead of attacking him, a policeman standing nearby helped the man to get it straight.

There are regional differences clearly, and they are in themselves unpredictable, and will persist for some time. Much is going to depend on how local commandants interpret their orders. It would seem that the government believes that the problem lies not so much with the officers—although there are exceptions—but rather with the rank-and-file. It is easy to understand why. As several commentators have pointed out, the lower echelons of the white component of the force (just under half of the total) are drawn from that section of the Afrikaner political structure that feels most directly threatened by the changes taking place in South Africa.

It is speculated that this discontent—even alienation—is one factor which is holding de Klerk back from lifting the State of Emergency in its entirety. The police would still enjoy enormous powers under the Internal Security and Criminal Procedures Acts, but the psychological impact of "losing" the Emergency would be enormous.

More, perhaps, than any other sector of South African society, the white policemen are being asked to place their trust in de Klerk, discard the experience of many years, and alter their habits. No doubt the government's commission of enquiry into SAP working conditions, announced by Police Commissioner General Hennie de Witt recently, will make the leap of faith easier to take, as it is expected that cuts in Defence spending will lead to an increase in the police budget. (The trend is already marked—spending on police rose by no less than 69 per cent between the 1983-84 and 1985-86 financial years.)

Nevertheless, there will be a great many policemen whose objections are ideological rather than simply material, as can be attested to by some recent events.

When the headquarters of the Congress of South African Trade Unions was last raided by police, one SAP vehicle appeared with the Afrikaner Resistance Movement's ersatz swastika painted on its roof. Subsequently, the minister of law and order ruled that policemen were barred from joining the organisation, but there is little doubt that this has had only a limited effect in practice.

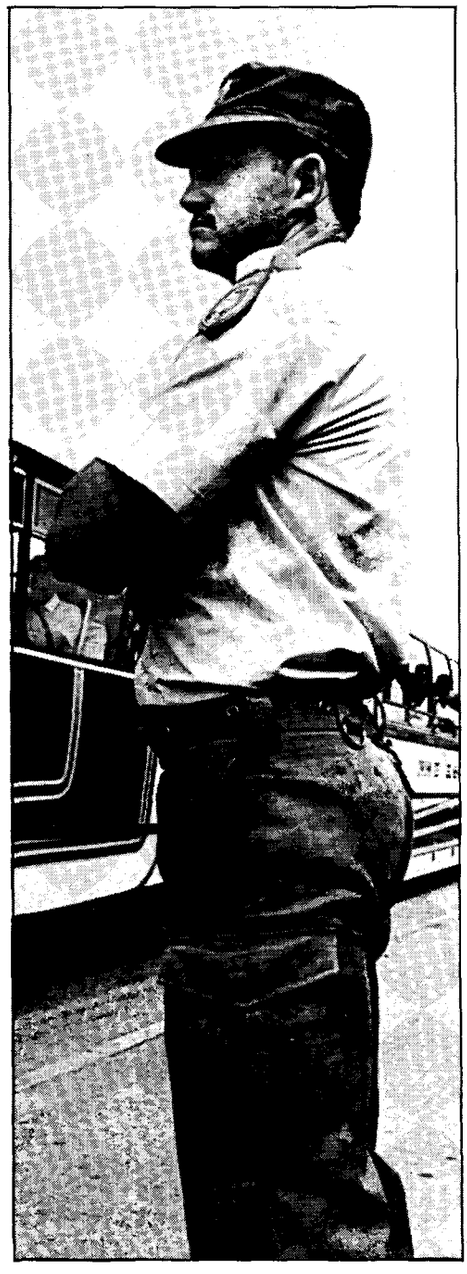
It is also notable that the majority of suspects arrested in connection with recent "hit squad" murders, such as those of human rights activist Dr David Webster and Swapo official Anton Lubowski, are former policemen. Terre Blanche himself was trained in the SAP, as was convicted race-murderer Barend Hendrik Strydom, who shot dead nine black pedestrians in Pretoria last year.

Even if the formal structures of the SAP are kept largely in check there will doubtless be incidents of "official" overzealousness as the anti-apartheid demonstrations grow in size and frequency over the coming months. It seems also frighteningly probable that "freelance" activities will increase.

Of course, this is a matter of anxiety not only for the government—but also for the resistance. But what is remarkable is the nature of the response of the resistance. Only a day after Terre Blanche's fire-and-brimstone appeal in Pretoria, Nelson Mandela stood up to address a huge gathering of followers on Cape Town's Grand Parade. During his historic speech, he pointedly, almost paternally, called on the police to act with "utmost restraint" during the uncertainty of transition.

There were "some good people" in the force, he said in a later interview, and at no time called on members of the SAP to resign. "Law and order is in our interests, too" he told me at his Soweto home last week. The police were perceived as "enemies of the people", he said, but it need not always be so. "The freedom movement is a political home for (our white compatriots) too," he said, and policemen only had to "abandon apartheid" to be welcomed.

No doubt his appeal will resonate more loudly within the ranks of black policemen; but Mandela has served notice that the battle for the loyalty of the white rank-and-file will not be left to de Klerk and Terre Blanche alone. Never before have the police been so fêted—and never have their true loyalties been so difficult to determine. ●



DAF

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Melanie McFadyean

The heavy wait

The Birmingham Six may be released at last. Melanie McFadyean talks to their wives and families—women who weren't prepared to sit back and do nothing

On 14 November 1974, a young Irishman, James McDade, from Ardoyne in Belfast, blew himself up planting a bomb in Coventry. A week later, on 21 November, his remains were flown back to Belfast for his funeral. People who had known him, some only vaguely, and Republican sympathisers and friends, went to Belfast from Birmingham and Coventry for the IRA funeral. Five Northern Irish men who lived and worked in Birmingham—Gerry Hunter, Richard McIlkenny, Johnny Walker, Paddy Joe Hill and Billy Power—decided in an informal, ramshackle way, to go over to Belfast.

Gerry Hunter's wife Sandra, born and bred in Birmingham, remembers when Jamie McDade lived with them. "He was bad-tempered and we threw him out. But the Irish community is close-knit, and if you hear of somebody blown to smithereens by his own bomb in Coventry, you would go to the funeral. Irish people didn't go to his funeral because he was an IRA man, but because he was a friend and they knew him. Irish people don't turn their backs."

To pass the time on the train journey to Heysham for the ferry across to Belfast on the evening of the 21st, the five friends played cards. Behind them in Birmingham, two bombs went off at about 8.15pm in two city centre pubs, the Mulberry Bush and The Tavern in the Town. The carnage was desperate—21 dead and 162 injured—the biggest murder in British history. The police were waiting for them at Heysham, and took them first to Morecambe police station, then to Birmingham.

The men's wives and children were going about their lives as usual. Johnny Walker's daughter, Veronica, now a vivacious 30-year-old, was 15 at the time. She remembers the family were watching *Top of the Pops*, something their father didn't allow when he was home. There was a news flash about the bombings. She was horrified. Theresa, Veronica's mother, was on night shift at the factory where she worked. But within hours, everyone in Birmingham knew about the bombs. What the families of the five men did not know was that they were being questioned about the bombings, and would shortly be accused of planting them. They found out soon enough.

The police came to Sandra Hunter's house and asked her where her husband was. In Ireland, she said. They asked her what she thought of the bombings. "I said, terrible, awful, shocking, IRA bastards, they should be hung. I wouldn't say anyone should be hung now." She shudders. The police went to all the women's homes; none of them were told their husbands were in police custody.

The next day, Eileen Callaghan made her way home after work. It was tea time. She let herself in as usual, then had the shock of her life. A man grabbed her by the arms as she went into the living room. "There were four men there," she recalls. "They asked me where my husband was and told me what to do when he came home. 'Act normal,' they said, 'draw the curtains and watch the TV.'" The day before, her husband Hughie had seen his five friends off and then, forgetting it was Eileen's birthday, had had a few drinks before coming home late. The police staking out Eileen's house didn't tell her why they were there. "And the guns on their hips, frightening." When Hughie let himself in, they seized him and took him away immediately. "The police stayed all night. I couldn't sleep and kept asking them what was the matter. Oh I can't think of it all now. I was suffering from shock and the doctor put me on tablets the next day. I took them for two years."

Eileen is a quiet, polite woman. She doesn't like to talk about what happened or how she has coped over the years. She has lived all her adult life in Birmingham, although she originally came from Ireland. On the Monday morning, she went to work. "I was doing school meals and had worked there for three years. I was in a state and I told my supervisor what had happened. Within 15 minutes I was suspended on full pay. One of the other women said I shouldn't have gone there. Another woman turned away and wouldn't speak to me."

There were more shocks in store—seeing her husband after he had been through the gruelling interrogations which all the men suf-

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From left to right: Breda Power, Veronica Walker, Theresa Walker, Lily Kelly and Kate McIlkenny—strong, independent and articulate women who have never stopped fighting

fered. "Oh, horrible seeing him with the bruises," she says. "It was terribly hard starting your life all over again. One day you have everything, a husband, a job, the next you have nothing. It was a nightmare—and still is."

Eileen Callaghan has since worked quietly for her husband's release and vindication. Eileen wasn't abused by her neighbours, but someone sent anonymous hate mail to her on the first anniversary of the bombings, which was doubly frightening as it meant that person knew her address.

Sandra Hunter and her three small children, and Theresa Walker and her six children, were harassed out of their homes by neighbours who overnight turned from friends to enemies. "They used to smash the windows, paint slogans on the walls, hang nooses on the gate. They painted 'IRA whore', 'Hang IRA murderers' on the walls and shouted 'IRA whore!' at me in the streets," says Sandra. "I stayed there for nine months until the trial started and then I went to Belfast."

But Sandra didn't stay there long. She felt she couldn't fight for Gerry's innocence from there and returned to her native Birmingham. Even now, her neighbours in the area she has lived in for 15 years don't know her story. Sandra doesn't want her picture taken, and has none of Gerry on view in her living room. She doesn't want people putting two and two together—the abuse she suffered has left her emotionally scarred and wary.

Like the other wives, Sandra's life was ripped apart by what had happened. She was only 26, and had been with Gerry since she was 14. "We met in a cafe, real 1960s, juke box. Couldn't stand him! Then one night we just clicked and started going out." Three years later they married. "Oh, we were in love, anybody will tell you that. I love Gerry and he loves me and nobody'll ever change that but whether it's the same after all these 15 years—sometimes they seem like a 100 years and sometimes a few months. You've got to fall in love again after so much pain, so much worry, so much sorrow." For the first 2½ years, Gerry and Sandra couldn't touch. Gerry was behind glass for visits. "It tears you apart. You don't know who you are. Your feet move but your mind's doing something else. You get an inferiority complex, you're frightened. For the first ten years, I used to look down the street when I got home to see if we had been firebombed. To this day I sit as far back as I can on the top deck of the bus—like that, if anyone was going to get me, I'd see them coming."

They smashed the windows and painted "IRA whore" on the walls and abused me in the street

Amid the "fears, tears and worries" Sandra recalls some laughs. They were constantly followed by Special Branch men in the early days. Once they thought they had identified a Special Branch man following them home after the trial in 1975—a man in a safari suit, who sat opposite them on the train. A few minutes later a blind man in dark glasses sat down beside him. Kate realised who the real policeman was when the blind man looked at his watch.

Theresa Walker's life changed forever at 2am on the morning of 22 November when Special Branch men with dogs came to raid her home. "They searched the house, the children were squealing and screaming. They didn't explain where they (the five men) were and asked me where Johnny was. They weren't abusive, they just wrecked the house." The next two nights, Theresa, Sandra, Kate and their 15 children all stayed together at Sandra's house.

When Theresa returned to her home in the street she'd lived in for ten years, it had been wrecked. Her neighbours were so hostile that every time she returned to collect her belongings, she had to have a police escort. Soon, at Johnny's request, Theresa and five of her six children went to live in Derry (her eldest daughter stayed in England).

Kate McIlkenny, a sturdy 53-year-old with a deep infectious chuckle, says she was lucky she had no problems with neighbours. With two of her grandchildren running about, and a budgie trained to speak by Richard in jail by her side, she remembers: "When it happened, I said to Sandra, 'They're innocent, there's no way they're going down.' I was the one at the end of the day who got an awful shock they'd put innocent men in prison. Twenty-one life sentences, I had to believe it!" After the trial ended, in August 1975, the tabloids did their stuff. They called the men "the death squad", "the brotherhood of blood", "the six mass murderers". The trial judge, Mr Justice Bridge, said: "You all stand convicted... on the clearest and most overwhelming evidence I have ever seen of the crime of murder."

The families never doubted their men. But very few people wanted to know when they claimed that they were innocent. Johnny's sister Lily says: "Nobody wanted to know, and I mean nobody. But now it's respectable and they all want to know."

For a few weeks, the six mugshots of the men's faces, still showing signs of the battering they suffered, were familiar to British people. Then everyone forgot. The families did everything they could to prove the men's innocence. The evidence which had convinced the trial judge was always suspect. The men were convicted on the evidence of four signed confessions, two verbal admissions and positive tests for nitroglycerine on two of the men's hands. The men have always maintained that the confessions were beaten and tortured out of them. But it was to be years before the evidence began to turn against the police and the authorities.

Breda Power was eight years old when her father Billy was arrested. She was watching *Planet of the Apes* on television when the news came on and her father's name was read out. "I heard his name and Gerry Hunter's, my dad's friend, and I thought because his name was on the news, he was dead. I started to cry."

Breda, the eldest of four, first took on the responsibility of trying to free her father when she was 14. "It was accepted, my dad was in jail for nothing for life, and there was nothing you could do about it." Her mother Nora, seeking to protect her, told her that all she needed to know was that her father was innocent, and so were the others. But, overcome by curiosity, she got out a box full of documents and cuttings one day while her mother was out. "I read about it and I thought, 'My dad couldn't have done those things, although it said that he did.'" Studying the confessions convinced her for good. "My dad doesn't talk like that, all that 'Oh, Jesus Holy Mary Mother of God' sort of thing. And even then I could see the contradictions."

Breda wrote to the Prime Minister and Home Secretary, and when they replied that it was not up to them but to the judiciary, she wrote back asking who the judiciary were answerable to. For a while she gave up: if the Prime Minister

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couldn't do anything, who could? Then, in 1985, *World in Action* exposed the unreliability of the nitroglycerine tests (handling the playing cards could have shown up positive). Breda became involved in the campaign again. She now devotes most of her time to proving the innocence of the six men.

The women are all convinced the men will be out soon. They reflect on some of the things that have been said in the past. What will the *Daily Express* say when the men get out? In 1975, the paper wrote: "They and their families were callous about the suffering of anyone who stood in their way. Their families are still ready to lie in their teeth about them."

Lord Denning spelled out the judiciary's difficulties when he ruled against the men in a civil action taken against the police in 1980. He said:

> If the four men win, it will mean that the police are guilty of perjury, that they are guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence and that the convictions were erroneous. This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say, 'It cannot be right that these actions should go any further.'

In 1988, the men's appeal was rejected. But since then, new witnesses have come forward. The West Midlands Serious Crime Squad, 24 of whose detectives were involved in the Birmingham Six case, has been disbanded. Of the 24, 11 have been disciplined, involved in criminal or civil actions for assault, or have had complaints of fabricated evidence made against them. The allegations suggest that abuse in the detective force goes back to the time of the six men's arrest. Just before Christmas, the lawyer, Gareth Pierce, delivered documents to Home Secretary David Waddington, on behalf of the six men. He told the House of Commons three weeks ago that he was considering the material given to him and would decide as soon as possible if it justified any intervention on his part.

Meanwhile, the women continue to wait. Kate McIlkenny says: "These last weeks every day seems like a week, time drags on, you're just sitting, waiting." Beside her is Richard's picture—a handsome young man, the man she first met. "I'll never forget seeing his face with the black eyes and stitches, the skin looking as if he'd been near to a blazing fire." Her memories are vivid. "Well I must still be in love," she says, "tramping all over this country, hail, rain and snow, going to America and Ireland, speaking to everyone who will listen."

As Sandra waits, she reflects on how much she has changed since she was a naive young wife of 26. "I wouldn't be the person I am now," she says. "But what a price to pay." These are all women who never expected to be anything but inconspicuous wives and mothers, working outside the home only to bring back the extra money their families needed. Now they are strong, independent and articulate women. Remarkably they are not bitter. So, once again, the qualities of working-class women in Britain are not brought out by opportunity, but are revealed by adversity.

Several of them are now committed to fight on for others caught up in miscarriages of justice. Kate says: "One thing you can be sure of, it won't be British justice that gets them out—only pressure from people."●

Real moolah

Real estate is the primary pulse of Donald Trump's Manhattan. A tale of two cities by Alexander Cockburn

The slightly eerie aspect of the crash of Drexel Burnham Lambert into bankruptcy is the calm with which people seem to be taking the downfall of the firm that perfected the financial world's cherished implement of the Roaring Eighties, the junk bond. Of course, it quickly became trite to say that, with Drexel gone, the eighties are well and truly over, but the matching question is not being asked: if the eighties are gone, what is arising in their place?

Over 50,000 people have recently lost their jobs on Wall Street, and these were the people who set the tone of the Reagan years. Twenty-five-year-olds, barely out of Harvard Business School before they were earning $400,000 a year in mergers and acquisition fees, are now sending out their resumés and wondering how to meet the mortgage payments on their $500,000 co-op apartments.

Television, always eager to trace a moral, found one the other night in the form of a contented young woman bottle-feeding a lamb on an Iowa farm. Six months ago she had been one of those $400,000 go-go queens of the capital markets, but now she's extolling her bucolic pursuits, in effect proclaiming that all that moolah in Manhattan would not get her back in front of a Quotron.

Trudge north from Wall Street and in the fullness of time you will come to the corner of Fifth Avenue and 56th Street, where the mighty structure known as Trump Tower stands. Here, too, albeit in less melancholy rhythms, another elegy to the eighties has been unfolding in the form of the estrangement of Donald Trump and his wife, locked in unseemly dispute over the contours of their prenuptial agreement, a document of similar length and complexity as the SALT II Treaty.

Now, the Trumps were not alone in setting the tone of Manhattan over the past decade and a half; they were but two notes in a blare of vulgarity, remorseless self-aggrandisement, ecstatic conceit. There are other fortunes flaunted in Manhattan that were even more crudely cut. But the rising curve of Trump's success, expressed in the marble and brass of his tower and the model—as yet unrealised—of his "television city" on the Upper West Side, offers us a measure of the city's primal pulse, real estate.

Trump himself set forth some of the essential data in his immensely successful *The Art of the Deal*, a typically eighties saga of success undisturbed by setback, unmarred by any thought too complex for the cover of *Reader's Digest*.

Trump flourished in step with the reordering of resources and consumption that began to take shape at the end of the seventies. From a desperate city he exacted, as did all the other developers, the tax abatements that he claimed were the only way he could avert ruin.

To New Money he offered sanctuary without shame: "From day one," he wrote, "we set out to sell Trump Tower not just as a beautiful building in a great location but as an event. We positioned ourselves as the only place for a certain kind of very wealthy person to live—the hottest ticket in town. We were selling fantasy." Thus, the 68-floor Tower was created, with its boutique-lined atrium clad in pink Breccia Perniche marble and its capacious triplexes at the summit, two of them converted by Trump, into his own spacious quarters.

Trump gave an entertaining account of our times simply by reporting who bought the 263 apartments on offer:

> At first, the big buyers were the Arabs... Then, of course, oil prices fell and the Arabs went home. In 1981 we got a sudden wave of buyers from France... François Mitterrand had been elected president... After the European cycle, we got the South Americans and the Mexicans, when the dollar was weak and their economies still seemed fairly strong... During the past several years, we've had two new groups buying. One is American—specifically, Wall Street types, brokers and investment bankers who've made instant fortunes during the bull market frenzy... The other new buyers are the Japanese.

At the moment, Trump is one of the most successful developers in American history, his enterprise concentrated entirely in a few luxury construction projects and gambling-hotel interests in Atlantic City. Given the distended nature of these assets, public opinion seems to have settled on the thought that his $25 million prenuptial settlement with Ivana, in the event of separation, was at the stingy end of the scale, particularly as Ivana was loyally workaholic, bawling out the doormen at the Hyatt if their trousers were poorly pressed, and superintending some operations in Atlantic City.

The trouble with developers is that in the end they look at everything in terms of the cost per square foot. (Not just developers, it has to be admitted. A successful young architect in Manhattan once told me how he'd done a co-op conversion for a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art, then watched as the trustee sawed a foot off either end of his eight-yard Olitsky painting so it would fit along his 22-foot

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Andrzej Krauze

penthouse wall.)

Trump Tower stands at the centre of an island that now famously displays its intimately-linked dioramas of wealth and misery: the rich in their castles, the homeless on the subway gratings and indeed in the old rail tunnels below the gleaming bulk of Trump's Commodore Hotel over Grand Central Station. Let us look briefly at the fortunes of two neighbourhoods to the north and south of the Tower.

My own apartment is on the Upper West Side, on Central Park West at 93rd Street. When I moved there in 1974 the landlord, old Mr Sheldon, set my rent at $400 a month, which I thought was on the steep side, even though the place is on the eleventh floor overlooking the park. The area was seedily genteel if you stayed on Central Park West and moderately dangerous if you moved down the side streets.

The Trumps weren't alone in setting the tone of Manhattan—theirs were but two notes in a blare of vulgarity

On adjacent Columbus Avenue, prudent pedestrians would veer to the centre of the street to avoid being mugged.

The park itself—this was pre-jogging days—was thought to be a pretty perilous place. The building, with some 72 apartments on its 12 floors, was built in 1910 and the rooms were spacious. The occupants were mostly par for the course for the white, middle-class Upper West Side: some Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany, many of them in the arts; a venerable Nobel prize winner in science on the third floor; a couple of writers (who became literary superpowers in the eighties) living on the sixth and third floors.

New York City decreed in 1962 that any dwelling built before 1947 was subject to rent control. So the elder residents in my building had their rents pegged at low rents like $200, and, though rent control ended in 1972, their direct heirs could inherit these highly desirable apartments. Since I was a new tenant, my landlord could set a fair market price ($400 in my case) and then, under rent "stabilisation" laws, hike it by about ten to 15 per cent every two or three years. My rent, after 16 years, has risen to $1003 a month.

Needless to say, landlords have raised a tremendous clamour about rent control and rent stabilisation, claiming that it is a disincentive to business, makes it impossible to operate, penalises the poor while favouring middle-class or rich people who had the luck or cunning to get hold of the rent-controlled apartments. There are indeed some absurdities, as all New Yorkers know well. The heiress to the MCA fortune lives in a rent-contolled apartment, at about $700 a month, twenty blocks south of me.

There are also plenty of laws on the books to allow landlords to raise rents if they can prove hardship, but of course the hardship that plagues the landlords is their inability to throw people out on the street by jacking up their rents by 500 per cent if the market looks ripe for such a move.

By the late seventies, the Upper West Side was being rapidly transformed. As leases expired, landlords began to raise commercial rents, forcing out small stores and services and renting to high cash-flow businesses like bars and restaurants and boutiques. It became a lot easier to buy a $500 suit looking like a wrung-out dishcloth than to get your shoes re-heeled or your typewriter fixed. Over one summer, I remember watching as every little brownstone between 97th and 103rd streets on the west side of Amsterdam was torn down. The developers who has assembled these parcels years before were finally making their move, tearing down the old structures and throwing up jerry-built apartment blocks in the great real estate boom that betwen 1979 and 1983 quintupled the value of real estate in Manhattan.

All over the Upper West Side, apartment buildings were being "co-oped" and in 1986 it happened to us. Mr Sheldon sold the building and the tenants hired a lawyer to strike a deal with the new owners. They finally fixed what is called a "non-eviction co-op" whereby renters would become owners, buying back the building. But renters who wanted to stay renters could do so. By this time the Manhattan real estate property boom was roaring to its climax.

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Some of my fellow tenants turned over their apartments and used the difference between the "insider" and "outsider" price to buy some new place in a cheaper part of the city. Others bought their apartments and stayed in them, becoming part owners of the building. Since I have the credit rating of Bolivia, I stayed on as a renter.

Everything was fine—while the boom lasted. But now the purchasing company, which did hundreds of similar deals throughout the eighties, has found that it paid Mr Sheldon—now dead—too much. In the squeeze, it has started defaulting on the rental and maintenance income it should be paying to the co-op owners. Meantime the co-op owners have been discovering the downside of property management, in the form of soaring costs in renovating an old building and high-interest charges on their own mortgages.

Meanwhile the character of the building has changed. Our first movie star—William Hurt—moved in. So did active young types who jogged a lot and were obviously making a killing on Wall Street. The building was clad in scaffolding and it shuddered with the crash of hammers as the young professionals did their conversions. By now, not only the walls but the co-op owners are shuddering as they have had to impose larger and larger maintenance costs on themselves.

Worse still, the Wall Street boom has begun to expire. That young woman in Iowa probably had to unload a $500,000 apartment on a falling market before she could enjoy rural bliss. The Upper West Side has become a mostly homogeneous yuppie enclave, poised to begin the long slide down to post-boom seediness as the banks count the defaulted mortgages and real estate loans.

Down at the other end of town, some 50 blocks south and a little east of Trump Tower, is the Lower East Side, much of it a great deal shoddier than the Upper West Side and with an ethnically far more diverse and volatile population. Here, too, in the seventies, development made its first visible forays, mostly spearheaded by the art markets. First, artists discovered a rundown district with fine industrial buildings that could be converted to studios large enough to accommodate even 24-foot canvasses. Next came bistros to service this avant-garde, then downtown galleries and then the boutiques to service the rich folk coming south to buy the art. Next thing you know, the artists had mostly become property dealers as their studios became worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Schopenhauer should have said, all art aspires to the condition of real estate.

Other swathes of the Lower East Side became semi-deserts as landlords recaptured apartments from renters and "warehoused" them, keeping them empty under padlock and chain, often making them unfit for even squatters by bashing holes in the floor. Their plan has been, and is, to get all the renters out by attrition or active harassment, then either tear down the building and put up a fancy new apartment block, or make sufficient "capital improvements" to octuple the rents.

Last week, some activists led a thousand-strong march south from Tompkins Square and Avenue B, scene of a police riot against the community in 1987, to the *New York Post*, formerly owned by Rupert Murdoch and now by a real estate developer called Peter Kalikow. He made his money mostly turning over apartments on the rich Upper East Side. Together with his brother Richard they have warehoused about a hundred buildings. The significance of the march commencing at Tompkins Square is that Richard Kalicow owns a block of ten buildings on the north side of the square. He's held them since 1975, and in 15 years has not rented out a single apartment. Altogether in New York it's reckoned that there are some 75,000 apartments deliberately standing empty. The city's homeless population is somewhere between 75,000 and 100,000.

But what can these marchers do, apart from fling abuse at the *New York Post*, whose coverage of real estate issues is predictably pro-landlord as is the *New York Times*, whose editorial page is a platform for landlords and developers? (The links between newspaper publishing and real estate have always been intimate.)

The demonstrators called upon newly elected Mayor David Dinkins to declare a takeover of private land left undeveloped by speculators holding out for another surge in the real estate boom. But Dinkins, like every other politician in New York, took his due amount of campaign cash from developers and is utterly unlikely to make any such aggressive move. What else can be done?

The city itself owns a lot of property in Manhattan and has come up with a series of neighbourhood development plans whereby it sells to developers on the understanding that 80 per cent of the land will become luxury housing thus enabling the remaining 20 per cent to be subsidised as low and moderate-income housing. But remember that in New York today a "moderate" income can mean a salary as high as $50,000, which gives us insight into the amount of housing for the poor that will be created by the "cross subsidy plans", as they are known. It's also as well to remember that not so long ago Ed Koch, Dinkin's predecessor, brusquely remarked that no one earning under $40,000 had any business living in Manhattan.

Now the "radical" proposal on the Lower East Side is that the split should be 50-50, and here we have a fine definition of what any supposedly practical definition of radicalism means today in a city that has more homeless and desperate people on its sidewalks than I saw in Belem, the capital of Amazonia. It's a split, where low and moderate income housing is set entirely in terms of the 50 per cent luxury housing where the developer makes his real pile.

Soon, the Lower East Side will be transformed into a mirror image of the Upper West Side, while the poor and the moderate-income folk are shunted into the outer boroughs, from whence came Donald Trump chasing his public: "I'm not talking about the sort of person who inherited money 175 years ago and lives on 84th Street and Park Avenue. I'm talking about the wealthy Italian with the beautiful wife and the red Ferrari. Those people—the audience I went after—came to Trump Tower in droves." ●

Marvellous things have been done by the new Soviet leadership. John Lloyd argues that these must not be forgotten as the crises of the economy and of nationalism threaten to engulf them

Moscow

The Soviet Union is now seen to be a terrible place, most of all by its own citizens. Travelling around the country to prepare, with half a dozen colleagues, a big USSR survey, we have been struck by the gathering sense of impending chaos. In every place and at every stratum, there is a growing clamour of demands and disappointment.

The radicals of the right are impatient at the slow pace of democratic and market reform; the old left hate both; the nationalists feel imprisoned; the Moslem peoples of the Transcaucuses and Central Asia now feel their kinship with each other and their emnity to the European Slavs; the mass of people feel their money to be worthless; the army feels threatened by cuts; the intellectuals are losing faith in the possibility of *perestroika* and are no longer entranced by the wide bounds of *glasnost*. All are intent on trying to secure their own ends, no one is able to make trade-offs and compromises lest civility be thought weakness.

Civility, after all, or a civil society, is where trade-offs are routinely made. But Soviet society has not been used or able to make such trade-offs for itself: these were made for it by the party. It is not that the party's decisions were always and everywhere those with which a democrat would disagree.

For example, as Geoffrey Hosking remarked in his 1988 Reith lectures, the decision to preserve, sometimes even create in literary form, the many languages in the Soviet empire, was an expansive gesture, one which created a rod for the communists' backs in providing a carrier for nationalism. But the point is not the content, but the medium. When you are forced to behave in a certain way, even if it is decent, it is harder to develop the considerable moral musculature it takes to behave decently by yourself.

The corrosiveness of this dark Soviet mood is such that even those areas which can reasonably claim success are blasted. A senior diplomat told me that where once the Foreign Ministry enjoyed prestige for winning new friends and reducing the threat of war, now it is criticised, in part because "if so much is awful, why

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Waving and drowning

should this be good? Everything, absolutely everything, must be awful."

There is a man I know called Yuri, who drops into my Moscow colleague's office every so often to trade news for use of the photocopier. He is a magnificent man, who is a member of the Democratic Union: a group he once described to me as having decided to act as if the Soviet Union were democratic, and put up with the consequences (occasional jail terms, though only of a couple of weeks). He came around last week, and his analysis of the current conjuncture was that civil war was now likely—or rather, a series of civil wars, gradually creeping in towards Moscow.

Yuri suffers not just from being labelled an extremist but from looking like one. When I first met him, over a year ago, I admired him but thought then his predictions of social breakdown and erosion of central authority were overdone. But he was right, and may still be. Indeed, he already partly is. There is suppressed civil strife—not quite war—between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and there are violent protests levelled largely against the Slav communists in Tadjikistan.

It is a time, then, to swim against the tide: to remind ourselves of how marvellous the last five years have been (Gorbachev became general secretary of the CPSU in March 1985). In these five years, the new Soviet leadership has obliterated eastern Europe as we know it. Of course it did not do it itself, and the best movements which have emerged there are strongly anti-Soviet (but not, in their leaderships at least, anti-Russian). Still, the explicit end of the Brezhnev doctrine had to be announced, and it took courage to do so. The new leadership has:

- freed the west from its necessary thralldom to huge nuclear forces, and opened up the possibility—so far only a possibility—of a cooperative keeping of the peace, at least in Europe and the US.
- helped make tyranny unfashionable, by not propping up, or by being increasingly cool towards, its "own" tyrants—Honecker, Jakes, Ceaucescu, Castro.

Within the Soviet borders, it has:

- created the Congress of Peoples Deputies which, with its Supreme Soviet, actually is developing into a body of serious debate, of real representation and a school for a political class.
- begun to shift policy-making away from the Central Committee apparatus towards the state. Sometimes, of course, the state is worse at policy-making, since the upper CC officials are an impressive élite and the ministry people were usually lower grade. But at least the state bureaucrats cannot justify their rule by reference to the end of history.
- given quite free expression to a wide range of ideas. In Moscow, in the first part of this month, a theatrical piece based on the Gulag Archipelago was playing (and it was being advertised in the foyer of the Foreign Ministry); *Ogonyek*, the best of the radical-right magazines, was about to publish the confessions of three KGB officers who described how they recruited domestic informers; and a people's deputy named Telman Gdlyan, who is presently terribly popular, gave a speech to hundreds of thousands in Moscow in which he accused Gorbachev of corruption.

That is about as good, at that extreme, as London, Paris, Rome and New York—even if in Moscow's case the maintenance of that state of affairs depends perilously on the continued survival of one man.

- the leadership has permitted—or at least not seriously tried to stop—the full exposure of the horrors of the Soviet system, not just the Stalin period, but the contemporary, interlocking sclerosis which is the Soviet economy. There is now a fundamental debate about the future of the economy: one which sees the new right (which for some reason, here and in the west, is called the new left) pit themselves against old (sometimes young) leftists for influence on the leadership.

Leading members of the government incline in this direction or that: Nikolai Ryzhkov, the Prime Minister with a background in big enterprise management, inclines towards the left and successfully killed any prospect of monetary or price reform last year when he reimposed central planning on the grounds that nothing else could force enterprises to put goods in the shops. Leonid Abalkin, the Deputy Prime Minister, with an academic background, inclines towards the right and last week introduced a draft law on property which ambiguously opened the door for private ownership. Much of this debate is highly politicised and at a technically low level: but it's a debate.

The beginning of the sixth year of Gorbachev is year zero for his revolution. He cannot finesse much longer

These are immense changes: epic in their scope, and in their continuing effects. It does not in this respect matter if they were all willed by the Gorbachev leadership: indeed, it is likely that many were not. But so far, there has been no successful attempt to rein them back: and some, at least in eastern Europe, are now beyond the stage of being reined back.

But within the Soviet Union, the very rapidity and scope of the changes have now created two gigantic movements, or sets of problems, which close like pincers on the leadership. The unfreezing of the glaciers has meant that the old nations of the Russian empire now seek to recreate themselves.

Everywhere, from Central Asia to the Ukraine, from Azerbaijan to Lithuania, popular fronts articulate nationhood in a way they have not done for at least four decades—some in ways they have never done.

Second, the economy is now ruinous. Few enterprises have learned market behaviour, because there is no market to learn it in. There is a vast pool of "hot money"—perhaps Rs10bn—which chases goods which are not being produced. Though the figures for the past year show an increase in consumer goods, many economists believe that, when vodka and price inflation is taken out of that, the production was at best flat, if not lower than before.

Public opinion remains hostile to cooperatives, hostile to price rises and fiercely protective of privilege: the government is too weak to challenge it. Earlier this month, a rise in the price of diesel fuel was successfully challenged by the trade unions, who feared that the extra cost would come out of their members' wage fund. The Finance Ministry backed down, and though keeping the rises, agreed to compensate the enterprises rouble for rouble.

These two crises meet a Party which has lost the power to control either. It is now conventionally said that it is split at least three ways: a right ("left") radical group, the left ("conservatives") and the centre. In conventional terms, this runs the gamut from neo-liberal to orthodox communist.

The new draft Party Platform, published last week after the Central Committee plenum, shows a Party apparently willing to lose its political monopoly: actually, of course, it has long since lost it in many republics. Communists in Lithuania have declared independence from the CPSU, and many are seeking to do so elsewhere, including the critically important Ukraine. Jumping on the back of the nationalist tiger is seen as the only way of avoiding being eaten by it.

The beginning of the sixth year of Gorbachev is year zero for his revolution. He cannot finesse much longer: the forces are too huge to be susceptible to Party manouevring. Whether or not there is an alternative within the Party, there are now alternatives in the makings of civil (it is often very uncivil) society in the vast, poverty-stricken cities and expanses of the Soviet Union. They are gathering their strength for the republic and local level elections at the end of this month and the beginning of next. This year, they must make their runs. ●

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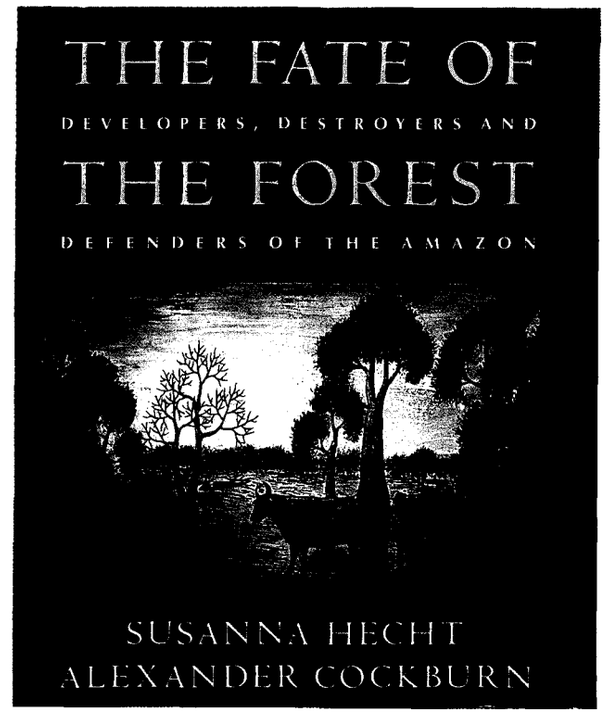

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POLITICAL COLUMN

Serbonian bog

Both parties are drowing in the morass of local government finance. Why not just side-step it?

Jolyon Jenkins

Paradise Lost, book 2, line 591, provides the right metaphor for local government finance: "That Serbonian Bog... where Armies whole have sunk". The Conservative army is evidently mired in the deepest part of Milton's Bog, the area marked "Poll Tax or so-called Community Charge". Labour is marching into a part so far uncharted but probably just as treacherous. With every able-bodied television producer in the land now busily making a documentary (for some, the second in six months) to illustrate the fact, the least sexy subject in British politics looks like monopolising our attention for some time yet.

Conservative MPs clearly feel that "Parachute Lost" (joke © Alan Coren) most accurately describes their plight. They are right. An opinion poll by NOP in October's *Local Government Chronicle* shows the extent of the government's political miscalculation. The poll was conducted in the 50 most marginal Conservative seats in England and Wales. It found that over the previous year, the poll tax had become markedly more unpopular. Most important, C1 and C2 voters, Thatcher's new shock troops, have in 12 months moved decisively against the tax. Voters in classes A and B are more or less in favour, but they would have voted Conservative anyway, and those in D and E are against, but are mostly firm Labour supporters.

In short, the Tory party, in abolishing the rates, became seduced by its own mythology about little old ladies living next door to families of strapping wage-earners, and lost sight of political reality. Poll tax or no poll tax, the little old lady will continue to vote as she has done all her life; but the strapping wage-earners are very likely former Labour supporters who have drifted steadily to the right over the past decade and may well have voted Tory for the first time in 1983. And they are most likely to suffer from the poll tax.

It's a measure of desperation in government that the weekend produced a rash of press stories, all with the unmistakeable aroma of the unattributable briefing, suggesting that if 1990-91 turns out to be too politically disastrous, the 1991-92 figures could be revised to increase the central government's subsidy to local authorities, thereby easing poll tax pressure. There is a sort of precedent for this. But it's no real answer: there would have to be a new round of poll-tax capping to stop authorities simply spending the new money while keeping poll tax as high as before. And capping is a clear admission that the political point of the poll tax—to increase local accountability—has failed.

It says something, too, about Labour's political nerve, that in the face of such turmoil, it seems unable to produce an alternative scheme that is clear, workable and defensible. Alarmed by Tory gibes that it was proposing two taxes in place of one, Labour has now come up with a scheme that contains elements of three: rates (because the tax will be based on the property you occupy), local income tax (because it will be graduated according to income) and a poll tax (because it will be levied on individuals rather than the head of the household).

Local taxation serves the same political purpose as the notice which says "do not throw stones at this notice"

Confused? You will be. The plan has been made public in as vague a way as possible, partly to stop the government trying to calculate its own figures, and partly because no one in the party has any idea what it really means. The official position is that it is still the subject of "internal debate"—or, to put it in layperson's terms, "bloody struggle". The shadow treasury team, which has wrested the issue away from Brian Gould's environment team, wants to minimise the local income tax element because it fears Kenneth Baker making jokes about 400 local chancellors of the exchequer, and because it wants to keep sole charge of the highly sensitive subject of income tax. It is quite possible that Labour could end up re-inventing the rates but based on capital values instead of notional rental income. And there is a powerful lobby in the party arguing that the party should come out in favour of reviving the old system.

This would not be altogether daft. A property tax is sensible, socialist and progressive: it would dampen down the housing market (less painful for new buyers than raising interest rates) and encourage renting and efficient use of living space. But rates, rather than taxing property *ownership*, tax property *occupation*. A genuine local property ownership tax would fail because urban local authorities own too much of the housing stock and would end up taxing themselves. But a national property tax would make sense.

How would this help? Well, actually it wouldn't: but at this stage it becomes necessary to grasp the nettle and say that local taxation is an idea past its sell-by date. There are time-honoured arguments that claim that it is an essential component of local democracy, but are they valid? If the poll tax fiasco has any political message, it is that local taxation does not generate local political accountability. We must have local taxation, runs the traditional argument, because that is the only way councillors can be made accountable to the electors. But in practice they are only held accountable *on the subject of local taxation*. If the only issue that matters in council elections is the size of the rates or poll tax bill, local politics, far from becoming more vibrant and participatory, becomes exceptionally dull. Local taxation then serves the same political purpose as the apochryphal notice that says "do not throw stones at this notice".

It is not an idea that Labour authorities would embrace, because the threat of Whitehall commissars stepping in to run everything chills the municipal blood; but "no representation without taxation" always was a curious slogan for the left to take to heart.

If local authorities got their money from central government according to a formula realistically weighted for poverty and demographic factors, then they need not necessarily be worse off. And a number of positive consequences would follow. Politics would become more a matter of how the money was *spent* rather than how it was raised—a much more exciting subject. Councils would lose the guaranteed right to be unpopular. We could turn our attention to other matters, like electoral reform of local government.

To be sure, paradise would not be regained. Income tax would have to rise by around seven pence in the pound—less if a national property tax was introduced. But the Serbonian Bog would be a thing of the past.

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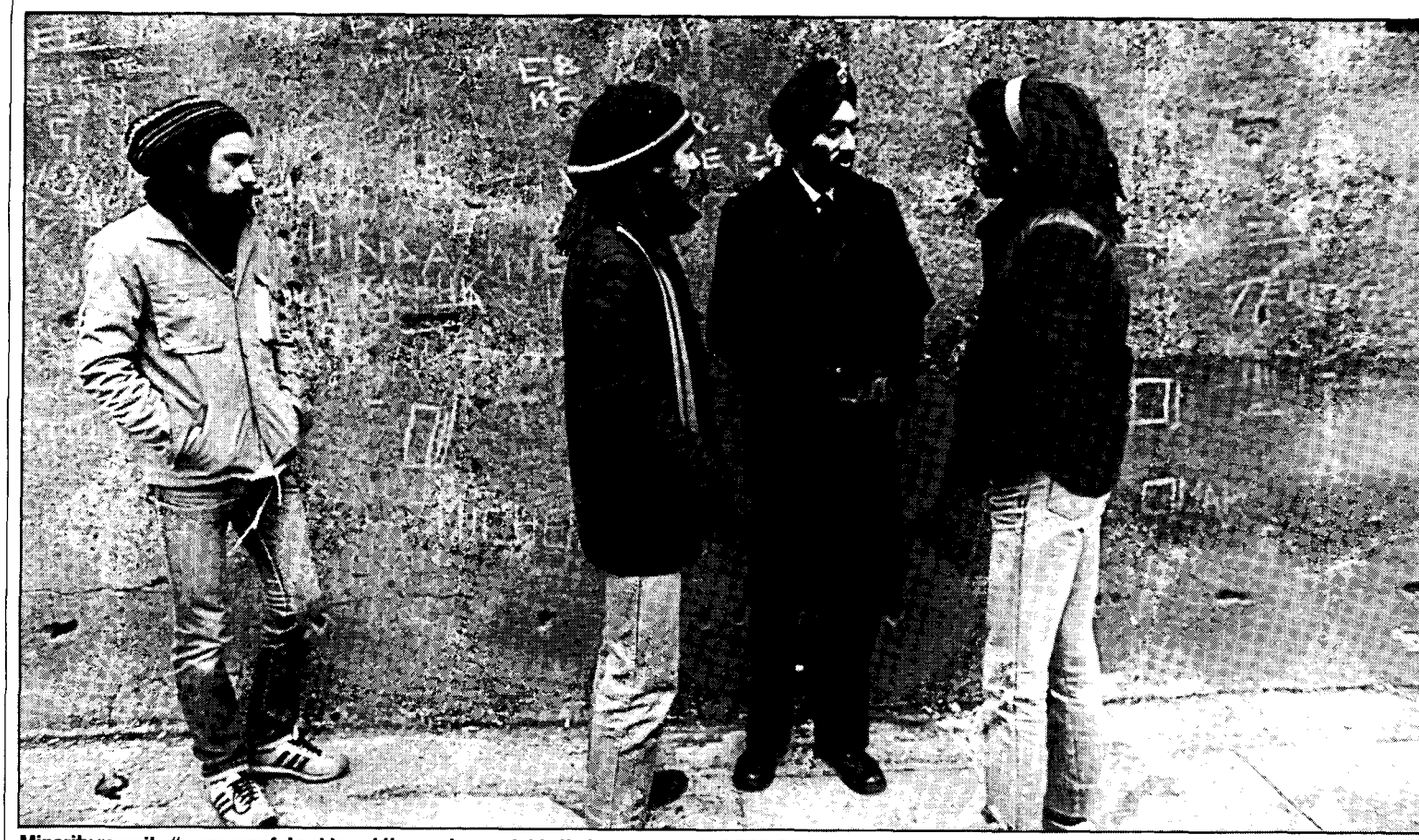

Steve Benbow/Network

Minority recruits "were careful not to set themselves outside their peer group". A Sikh PC meets rastafarians in Cardiff

Softly, softly

When police recruits have training on race relations, they often don't notice that it's happened. And their prejudices may stay intact. Helen Franks reports on the soft sell

The young white man had completed his initial police training: 20 weeks at the Metropolitan Police Peel Centre in Hendon, and ten in a London borough. "You can't be trained to change racist feelings," he declared, perhaps in defence of his own.

But had anyone tried? No, he said, and half a dozen fellow recruits listening agreed: they'd had no training about racism. A woman from the probation and community liason department sought to enlighten them. "Yes you have," she said. "No we haven't", they answered. And in fact both were right. The training did exist, but it hadn't made any impact. With the Met's new "customer satisfaction" survey showing that 20 per cent fewer blacks than whites find the police friendly, perhaps it's time it did.

What the police call "interpersonal skills training" or "community and race relations training" started six or seven years ago. Martyn Horne, chief inspector with responsiblity for curriculum design at the Peel Centre, sees it as part of an evolving programme.

"We have a number of advisers and outside consultants who have been coming in over the years, and we've taken on board a great deal of what they've said to us. I wouldn't say that we had a race relations adviser, though part of the input is on race relations. What we're trying to move towards is full equal opportunities, whether for race or sex, and that goes on almost subliminally in all relevant lessons."

The average police recruit remains young, male and white. Women make up around 11 per cent of the force, ethnic minorities under 2 per cent. In a group of 30 recruits I met during their eleventh week of training, about a quarter were women and only two represented a visible ethnic minority—from their appearance probably half-white, half-Asian. Majority attitudes were easy to spot, with little sympathy for gays, single-parent families or large families.

A workshop exercise on where a police officer might live revealed the unpopularity of high-rise council flats, along with the following: "No left-wing councils where they don't allow baa baa black sheep"; "Not too many ethnic minorities; we don't want our kids taught Sikh, Punjabi rules, etc."; "Nowhere in Brixton or Southall".

Despite protestations that this had nothing to do with "that rubbish about racism", the argument progressed to: "They would be threatening us in our own customs, wouldn't they?", and "This is our country and our laws". A quiet woman said she had threatened to keep her children away from school because the language teaching was holding them back: "I'm sorry, I'm not being racist, but we need O-level English not O-level Punjabi."

One widely-held attitude was that Asians "sponged...they come into our hospitals, take council housing, go on the dole, never put a penny in..." The half-Asian woman pointed out that passport-holders were entitled to their rights. The discussion then quickly reached stalemate, with the repeated denial: "We're not talking about racism, we're talking about prejudice," and a rejoinder in language reflecting

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the tuition: "There's a negative stereotype among some communities towards the police."

How does a trainer respond? Sergeant Maurice Williams chose to ignore semantics and went for fine sentiments. "If the police mix prejudice with power, what have you got?" he asked rhetorically. "Discrimination. You're the dominant group. We have the power and we have to recognise it. If you practise equal opportunity, the question of race has no meaning at all."

Sergeant Williams is a quiet, thoughtful man fresh from a six-week pilot course with Equality Associates, an organisation specialising in training the trainers. This was his first opportunity to practice his new skills, which clearly included getting his students to air their views with ease. He was gentle, he listened carefully and articulated the position of the police in society. What he didn't do was challenge the ideas presented to him. There was no take-up of individual arguments or deeply-felt attitudes, no exploration of the feelings expressed. Why?

"This is a warm-up, to get the ball rolling. You don't show up anyone who is very fixed in ideas in the class. That was one of the things we learned on the pilot training," said Williams. "Near the end of the course, we liaise with community groups. They come in and give us a 'for instance' and we role play to see how they get on."

So how do these young recruits come to understand the reasons for their prejudices or learn to take responsibility for them? "We're doing the groundwork now. It's a question of building bricks and hopefully when they get to the top they'll put the roof on." This, presumably, is what Martyn Horne meant when he referred to the "almost subliminal" approach—in other words, no confrontation. "Race relations used to be introduced as specific lessons," he comments, "but in consultation with outside experts it was discovered that they weren't having the impact. They became a kind of tokenism."

Inspector Clive Emmerson, part of Horne's team of training administrators, explains that "If you say, 'this lesson's about racism' they say 'well I'm not a racist so I don't need to be here,' and they switch off. Or it could cause a few problems in them trying to learn it. We've learned from experience and from the consultants who have been able to advise us that a lesson on racism is the wrong approach."

Problems over "lessons on racism" in the past have made the police so appreciative of their current advisers. In 1983, an outside lecturer from a college of further education was invited to teach students at the cadet school. He caused an outcry by setting an essay on racism to students and leaking their written answers to the press. This was confrontation of the brutal kind—a deep betrayal that left painful scars and fears about "people making the assumption that because you're white, you're racist and should have a guilt complex", as Martyn Horne put it.

There is surely still a place for some confrontation in the classroom. Most trainers in interpersonal skills, like most counsellors or psychotherapists, use techniques to help their clients move on in their thinking without allowing them the escape-route of denial. The ultimate purpose of getting people to speak candidly is to foster enlightenment by seizing the moment in a supportive but assertive manner.

If this is not happening in police training, there could be a number of reasons. The subject of racism appears to arouse discomfort and anxiety. The recruits' denial of their racism is almost certainly reflected throughout the force, with the problem often dismissed as "merely canteen culture": yet another denial. The "softly, softly" approach, buried tastefully in equal opportunities, puts the emphasis on being fair to others rather than on self-understanding. And the hierarchical nature of the police force sits unhappily with the creativity needed in interpersonal skills training.

So what is to be done? The confidence of the trainers needs building. Sharper assessment of potential recruits would weed out the most intransigently prejudiced. Better ways to attract and keep ethnic minority recruits and gain the trust of their communities are essential.

But it would be wrong to put all the responsibility onto the police. Their recruits may not be academic, but they are not louts either. They are mainly bright, decent people endowed with that same terrible innocence that pervades the whole force, an innocence bred out of a sense of old-fashioned duty and regard for authority. If they grow up in fear and resentment of strangers, it is an indictment of society at large.

Five years ago, a Policy Studies Institute report called for the police force to "stimulate *explicit* discussion about the ethnic dimension of policing at all levels... Open discussion and exposure to outside views is not a guarantee of progress, but it is a necessary condition".

The open discussion has arrived, and so has some exposure to outside views. But more recruits and trainers from ethnic minorities will not alone guarantee progress. It was noticeable that the two half-Asians in Williams' class were careful not to set themselves outside their peer group, an experience that would have been painful and destructive. The young woman insisted at the end of the day that the training had not been about racism. The young man said, "There are other prejudices we all have about all sorts of things that we didn't have time to discuss. It's not only a black issue."

One of his colleagues summed up the day best: "It got things off your chest, but I don't think opinions will change. Mine certainly won't." If the Metropolitan Police want to train recruits out of racist feelings, as every indication shows they do, then they have yet to find the right ways to achieve it.

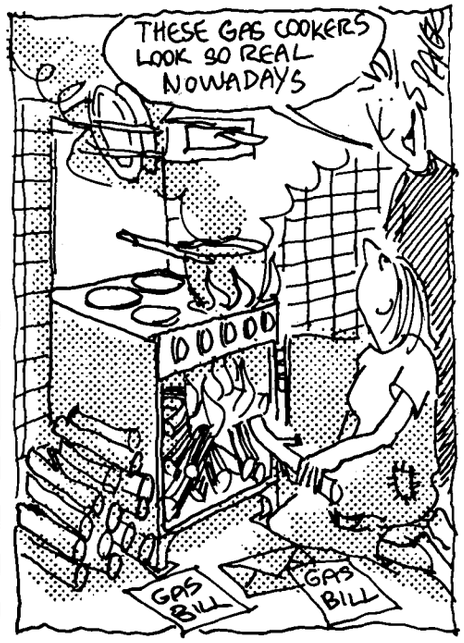
Poverty

Second worst

Brian Hill looks into a chamber of household horrors

"It looks like a nice cooker," said John Richardson, "but we had it tested and it leaks gas so much it would fill a room overnight. You can imagine the consequences if someone struck a match." It's a good job that John got to the cooker before some unsuspecting bargain hunter. John is a trading standards officer for Cleveland County Council and the lethal cooker forms part of an exhibition which he and his colleagues have put together to highlight the dangers of the second-hand market. They visited flea markets, car boot sales and second-hand shops, buying goods that might be found in a typical bedsit.

Also featured in this chamber of horrors are incorrectly wired electrical items, highly flammable furniture and cots you would be mad to put a baby into. Or if not mad, just poor. The people who buy these deadly (but often innocent-looking) items are social security claimants. More specifically, they are people who have to rely on the social fund. Prior to its introduction in 1988, supplementary benefit claimants could get non-repayable single payments for essential household items. Legislation provided for sufficient money to purchase new or reconditioned goods. In other words, certain safety standards were guaranteed. The social fund swept away these safeguards and people now apply for a loan which is discretionary, with no right of appeal. Budgets are also cash limited, and in many DSS offices the cash runs out before the financial year does.



Nigel Paige

Lesley Bradley used a social fund loan to buy a washing machine. "The knobs broke off and I had to use pliers to operate it. Somehow the electrical current got into the casing and I was getting a shock every time I used it." Lesley survived and has bought a new washing machine since getting a job, but others are not so lucky. John Richardson points out that ten babies die every year because they sleep in cots

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that fail to meet safety standards.

The sale of some faulty second-hand goods is strictly illegal, and traders are prosecuted. But cash-starved local authorities simply don't have the resources to nail all the unscrupulous merchants. In such a lucrative market, the traders who are caught pay their fines and carry on in business. According to Cleveland's chief trading standards officer, Eric Robinson, there's another problem. "We've seen a massive increase in car boot sales over the last two years and these people are not covered by legislation, they're private sales."

Trading standards departments have other things to do with their dwindling numbers of officers and limited budgets. "We have a purchase budget," says John Richardson, "with which we buy new items coming onto the market that might be dangerous. If we find one that's wrong we can ban the sale of 20,000 others. All we're doing here is spending a thousand pounds to protect a few people."

Rising interest rates, among other pressures, have sent the profits of the high street retailers into a downward spiral. Any observant urban dweller will have noticed increased activity in the second-hand market. Clearly it would be wrong to blame the social fund for all of the dangerous goods currently on offer, just as it would be wrong to say that second-hand dealing is inherently bad. Household goods should have as long a life as possible.

But it is still iniquitous that the poorest in society have lost safeguards, and must make do not just with second-hand goods, but with the very worst on offer. For Cleveland welfare rights officer Fran Watson their plight is more proof of the social fund's failure: "It's a disaster, Families in desparate need are being turned down for very basic items. The single payments system wasn't perfect but it was a lot better than this."

Health

Boxed out

Julian Dobson wonders who will care for the homeless

Homeless people lining London's Strand with their cardboard boxes are not the best advertisement for Britain's housing policies. When those people are mentally distressed it becomes positively embarrassing.

Steve Pyke/Network

The result of a fight between two homeless men. Who will pick up the pieces now?

Little wonder that the government is now taking the problem seriously. After Environment Secretary Chris Patten's announcement last November of £250 million extra funds to tackle homelessness, Health Minister Roger Freeman is working on a new initiative to cater for homeless people's health needs.

Around £5 million has been promised in discussions with three housing associations working with people sleeping rough in central London. St Mungo's, Bondway and Thamesreach are talking to senior civil servants about providing about 70 beds for those with mental health problems.

But poor planning and the side-effects of the NHS reform could tighten the screw on thousands of homeless people. It is already difficult for someone with no fixed address to register with a doctor. Voluntary groups say the introduction of the GPs' new contract on 1 April will make that worse. It is difficult, too, for a homeless person to receive treatment after discharge from a hospital casualty unit. An internal market within the NHS could close more doors, with health authorities bickering about who will pay for any aftercare.

"As we already know on the psychiatric side, care in the community may well mean care in the gutter," says Julia Schofield of the pressure group Hospital Alert. Her group has joined other voluntary organisations in attacking the government's health plans. They are calling on ministers to give guidance to health and local authorities to ensure integrated planning can take place. They want funds set aside to pay for convalescent care for homeless patients. And they want the idea of a medical audit to include detailed assessment of the accessibility of services for the homeless.

The most immediate problem, particularly for the estimated 64,000 homeless people in London, is getting to see a general practitioner. There is already evidence that access will worsen after 1 April. At the Bloomsbury Project for the homeless in Camden Town, north London, the full-time GP, Dr Sue Bennett, will leave at the end of March when funding for her post runs out.

Until a week ago only three two-hour sessions had been found to replace her 35 hours a week. Then Camden and Islington family practitioner committee stepped in with extra cash, and now around 12 hours are guaranteed.

Many local GPs are unwilling to register homeless people because they believe they will be time-consuming and expensive, Dr Bennett says. GPs fear this will hinder them from meeting the government targets on which their salaries will depend. Bloomsbury Project staff have seen more than 2,000 patients at their drop-in centre over the past three years, and numbers are increasing.

Only 11 per cent of patients have had a GP in London. Dr Bennett says around ten per cent had been actively seeking registration with a doctor before coming to the centre. One had been turned away 11 times. "At the moment it's just a nightmare," she says. "There's a doctor there five days a week and we can't cope. There are so many new patients coming in."

Even organisations that have had some success in recruiting GPs, like the East London Homeless Health Project in Tower Hamlets, are worried about the future. "It's like a third-world situation," comments coordinator Jim Smellie. "If funding isn't continued the project collapses. If and when doctors become unable to do sessional work for us, it will be difficult to replace them."

The problem is not confined to London. In Leeds, Dr Philip Leftley of the Health Care Team for the Homeless says local doctors are increasingly reluctant to register homeless people. Many are unlikely to accept homeless families because their uptake of immunisation and cervical smear tests is low, he claims. "If a practice is in a marginal position about whether it will achieve its targets, it may well be reluctant to accept these people on its lists." The new contract demands that both services reach a high proportion of affected patients.

The internal market will pose additional difficulties. Homeless people who travel may find local hospitals consider them somebody else's problem. Accident and emergency units may be reluctant to treat people when the funding of that care could be in dispute.

"The concept is that money goes with the patient," Dr Leftley explains. "If you get somebody who doesn't have a regular place of abode, are they going to be accepted for treatment?" He believes that "healthcare is being rationed, and the homeless, because of their disadvantages, are going to come off badly".

But the obvious need of homeless people is for a home. Many health problems stem from the absence of a permanent roof. To provide homes and treat the health and social problems of homeless people requires integrated planning and cooperation between government departments, say voluntary groups.

"Some mechanism has to be found to ensure funding is there for homeless people," says Julia Schofield. "There's no point whatsoever in giving somebody surgery or medical treatment and then putting them out on the street."

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Welfare Watch

Exclusion zone

Only the happy few will get proper sick pay, says Tony Lynes

The benefits bulldozer rolls on relentlessly. Last week, with the help of the Commons committee on the social security bill, it demolished a large block of long-term sickness benefits, built only 12 years ago.

The victim of this latest act of vandalism is the earnings-related addition to invalidity benefit. Payable after six months of sickness, invalidity benefit consists of a basic flat rate payment of £43.60 a week, a small age-related addition, and an earnings related addition based on earnings from 1978 on.

The average earnings-related element is now only about £9 a week, many of those receiving it having had little opportunity to build up entitlement since 1978. For new claimants, however, it is worth far more. A man with average male earnings from 1978 on, claiming invalidity benefit in 1990-91, would get £33.85 a week, and the corresponding figure in 2000-01 would have been £66.35 (both at 1989-90 prices).

The effect of the bill is that earnings after April 1991 will not count towards the addition. Instead of doubling by the turn of the century, it will rise to only £40.15 and will then fall year by year as the period 1978-91 forms a diminishing part of claimants' working lives.

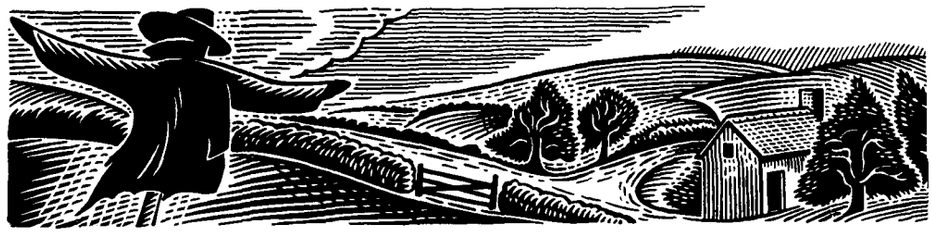
The goverment offers two excuses. The first is that the long-term saving—officially £1.3 billion a year by 2025-26—will provide, as the minister Nicholas Scott put it, "room for manoeuvre in the next century". This is sheer fantasy. Social security ministers fighting for extra resources in 2025 will get no credit for cuts made 35 years earlier.

The second excuse is that earnings related invalidity benefit is not needed because nearly 60 per cent of employers are now covered by long-term occupational sick-pay schemes. That claim is based on a survey by IFF Research published in 1988 (*Occupational Sick Pay Schemes*, £6.25 from DSS, PO Box 21. Stanmore, Middx. HA7 1AY).

What the survey actually showed was that nearly all public sector employees had some form of long-term sickness cover, but only 39 per cent in the private sector. Nearly half the large manufacturing firms' schemes excluded manual or non-salaried workers. Over a third of schemes excluded the first six-12 months' employment, and many excluded sickness caused by pre-existing conditions. A more up-to-date survey would no doubt add Aids to the common exclusions.

All of which suggest that the number of private sector employees who will actually get long-term sick pay if they need it is nearer 10 than 60 per cent. Hardly a firm basis for abolishing the state scheme's alternative.

FRINGE BENEFITS



Colin Ward salutes girl scouts, eighty years on

If I said I always had a soft spot for the scout movement you would fall about in derisive laughter. So I ought to confess my support for the venerable co-operative alternative, the Woodcraft Folk, which never had those sexist, monarchist and militarist hang-ups.

But the news that the Scout Association had decided to allow girls to join (to the discomfiture of the larger Girl Guides Association) coincided with the death of Lord Maclean, who as Chief Scout made the devastating decision to replace wide-brimmed hats with berets and shorts with long trousers. This led me to think, yet again, about the sociological distinction between structure and function.

As everyone knows, the Founder was Robert Baden-Powell, subject of endless biographies revealing unpalatable truths. The worst was about the siege of Mafeking in the South African War. It was what we now call a media event, stage-managed for his own advancement. There never was a siege. Even the mail got through, including proofs of B-P's book about his own heroic role in it. The soldiers in the relief column were better fed once they had got *inside* the unbesieged town. Meanwhile the "natives" starved. B-P had one of them executed for stealing a goat.

Back home, the self-created hero, with the press king C Arthur Pearson, carefully planned a serial publication, *Scouting for Boys*, using material borrowed from American woodcraft enthusiasts like Ernest Thompson Seton. Some of them sued. But the weekly issues found an eager audience. Leslie Paul related how: "With an astonishing perception they leapt at Scouting as at something for which they had been waiting, divining that this was a movement which took the side of the natural, inquisitive, adventuring boy against the repressive schoolmaster, the moralising parson and the coddling parent. Before the leaders knew what was happening, groups were springing up spontaneously, and everywhere bands of boys, with bare knees and broomsticks, began foraging through the countryside."

The function preceded the structure, and of course the Association was soon founded, under royal patronage, to take control. But by 1909 at least 6,000 girls had become Boy Scouts, and at a rally at the Crystal Palace that year plenty of them turned up in their scout hats and scarves, carrying their staves.

The eagle eye of The Chief discerned that they weren't actually boys, and deputed his poor sister Agnes to hive them off at once into the body that became the Girl Guides. The new organisation was slow to grow, particularly as the girl equivalent of Cubs were to be Rosebuds, only later redesignated as Brownies.

The Scout movement, like later youth organisations in both east and west, has always been subverted by the actual interests of its members, or simply used by them for the facilities it gave access to. When Paul Neuburg was a boy in Budapest and like the city's other schoolchildren joined the Red Flag Club, actually run by the State Security Corps, the ideology washed over him. "In fact it occured to me to remember my socialist club with gratitude only when I emigrated to the west and found that there one had to pay for tickets to the swimming pool and everything else."

When Louis Heren, later foreign editor of the *Times*, was a poor boy in Wapping in the 1930s, he belonged to the 2nd City of London Sea Scouts just because there was no other way of getting near a boat. He recalls his troop as "an extraordinary self-governing, self-motivating and self-perpetuating group". Even when their meeting-place was moved to Captain Scott's *Discovery* moored on the Victoria Embankment in the heart of London, "amazingly, the independence and internal anarchy of the troop remained unimpaired".

Organisational structures always limp afer local realities. The three rejected girls in Northumberland who, after a year of campaigning, are to be allowed to join the 1st Wark and District Scout Group, have many forerunners. It is 14 years since Janice and Marie successfully enrolled in the 31st Battersea Scout Group, and there were heroines behind them, quietly challenging the official reality.

It calls for some kind of salute to those Edwardian girls, shoved off the parade ground by Baden-Powell. So it's sad that the Girl Guide Association, in the words of its Chief Commissioner, is "angry, surprised and disappointed" by the Chief Scout's announcement. Perhaps both organisations have reached the point when they can regain the spirit of those happy early days, when they didn't need chiefs.

People who rejoice that their children enjoy a regular activity on Thursday evenings or weekend shouldn't be totally indifferent or jokey about the way the machinery lumbers into the 1990s. The adult world has similar maladjustments between reality from below and the official structure. Have we coped any better?

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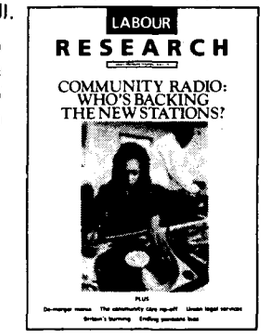

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Society Today is *NSS*'s term-time page for sociology students

Off the beat

Pat McNeill asks why the friendly bobby has become the feared enforcer

The Taylor report on the Hillsborough disaster, which placed the blame firmly on the South Yorkshire police, was another heavy blow to their public image. At least, in that instance, the police were convicted only of incompetence, aggravated by a refusal to admit fault. That is perhaps an improvement on being shown as corrupt, in the case of the Guildford Four, or out of control, as at Wapping, or guilty of criminal assaults, as in recent cases where courts have awarded damages against the police. Whatever happened to the traditional British bobby, a figure known to student readers of this column only through old films?

Critchley, the best-known historian of the British police, traces their origins to the Saxon tythingman, who was the elected representative of a group of ten families and embodied the community's collective responsibility to apprehend and punish its own wrongdoers. This arrangement was much modified but its underlying ethos, says Critchley, lasted into the 18th century. It could not, however, survive the rapid social changes which resulted from the development of industrialism and the movement of populations into towns. This created the need for a specialist force.

Though the Bow Street Runners had been formed in London by the 1780s, the first proper police force in this country, the Metropolitan Police, was established in 1829. By 1856 there were over 200 such forces in England and Wales. Their role was spelled out by Mayne in 1829 and reiterated by Lord Scarman in 1981: "the prevention of crime...the protection of life and property, the preservation of public tranquillity". The police are an arm of the state, which has a monopoly of the legitimate use of force in society and exercises it, according to this view, in the interests of the citizenry as a whole.

A more critical analysis of the creation of a specialist police force explains it as the result of the rise of capitalism rather than simply of industrialism. As a state agency, the police force necessarily operates in the interests of the ruling class. The maintenance of public order means the control of working-class resistance against its exploitation. The vigorous use of the police against the Luddites, the Chartists and later uprisings can be explained in this way. While the police help the working class as individuals to protect themselves against crime, they are opposed to the interests of the class as a whole. This helps to explain the ambivalent working class attitude to the police described, for example, by Richard Hoggart in 1955: "They tend to regard the policeman primarily as someone who is watching them, who represents the authority which has its eye on them, rather than as a member of the public services whose job it is to help protect them."

In so far as the police are in the business of maintaining order and controlling deviance, theirs is undeniably a political role. However, the relative consensus and stability of the years after the second world war made it possible to develop an image of the police as a non-political force. This image is now questioned on every side.

Reiner (1985) suggests that an improvement might have been expected. The police include a more representative cross-section of the population, including graduates and women; they are better-trained and equipped; they are, on balance, more accountable. And yet public attitudes have steadily worsened while mistrust and hostility have grown. Why is this?

Reiner identifies several interrelated causes. First, there were the bribery and corruption scandals of the 1970s. Mass dismissals and retirements have reduced these, but they have been replaced by cases of police abuse of power and faking of evidence. Last June's disbanding of the West Midlands Regional Crime Squad shows that the police recognise the scale of the problem, and great store is set by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984, which was intended to minimise the potential for corruption.

Next, the use of paramilitary style force by the police has grown, both in urban riots and in political demonstrations and industrial disputes such as the miners' strikes and at Wapping.

Senior policemen are now more ready to enter into public debate. The Conservative Party in particular has made law and order a party-political issue and senior policemen are thereby associated with Tory politics, especially as several Labour local authorities have taken strong anti-police stances on questions such as racial harassment.

Police personnel have come off the beat and become motorised. They use increasingly specialised and hi-tech equipment. They are more involved in plainclothes work; surveillance and intelligence. Increasingly, the police regard themselves as a profession and entitled, like other professions, to act beyond the control of lay people. Hence they insist that other officers should enquire into misconduct.

Above all, in terms of a deteriorating public image, the police are regarded as less and less effective at what the public sees as their main task—crime prevention and detection. Crime rates rise and clear-up rates fall.

Recent moves towards community policing are intended to restore the balance between a remote professional force keeping the populace under control and a public service for people in need of help. But the wider context of policing has also changed significantly. In the last 25 years, British society has again become deeply and overtly divided on social and economic lines, with increased industrial militancy, ethnic divisions, and the re-emergence of a deprived underclass. In addition, many members of the middle class have joined political and civil libertarian protest, which has brought them into conflict with the police for the first time.

Whether all this is seen as a crisis of capitalism or evidence of growing *anomie* in a rapidly changing world, a divided society is one in which the police have to take sides. Policing by universal consent is no longer possible, and policing by enforcement may be inevitable.

Discussion topic:

What images of the police are promoted by "The Bill"?

Reiner, R. (1985) "The Politics of the Police" Wheatsheaf

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Flesh ties

Christa Wolf is the greatest living German writer. Her works include "The Quest for Christa T." and "A Model Childhood". She was born in 1929 in what is now Poland. She has said that when she was young she never met a soul opposed to Hitler, and that she had difficulty, after her sixteenth birthday, learning to say "Auf wiedersehen" instead of "Heil Hitler". At the end of the war she fled westwards and settled north of Berlin. In 1949 she joined the SED, ruling party of the GDR.

During the past few months Christa Wolf has been speaking at demonstrations and writing appeals and articles.

The interview was conducted by Aafke Steenhuis and translated by Barbara Einhorn

Does the fact that people in the GDR put up with Stalinism for 40 years have something to do with the war?

My generation identified very strongly with this society, and from very early on, because in the forties we were forced into an intense and radical confrontation with the fascist past. That process created a very strong bond with this society, a society which was being built by anti-fascists, as people here always phrased it so beautifully. This bond remained as strong as it did because we had no alternative.

The Federal Republic with Adenauer and Globke: it was impossible for me to live there. Of course, the Federal Republic has changed, and my relationships with people there have changed too. But we still held onto the hope that forces would emerge here which could succeed in making the core of the socialist dream come true. Naturally, our hopes were higher in the first few years. Those hopes were dashed in 1968 when the tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia. That was an existential shock for us.

What happened in the 20 years that followed was sometimes better, sometimes worse, but in the final analysis the old Stalinist structures and ways of thinking became entrenched. And yet there are an astonishing number of people in the GDR who can think very well and very freely. I'm quite sure that fascism, the war and problems not voiced between the generations all play a large part in these political upheavals.

But the nationalism and xenophobia which are coming out now make me feel utter despair, because we know those lines. We've heard them before. And the fact that they're still there, that they keep reappearing, is just terrible.

Why did it take so long for a broad-based democratic movement to emerge?

It's to do with the fascist past and also with the division of Germany. Recently, one of our theatre directors, Frank Baier, put into words the reason why we have such strong bonds with this state. Because as very young people who grew up under fascism, we were full of guilt and gratitude towards the people who had rescued us from that. They were anti-fascists and communists who had come back from camps, prisons and exile and who set the tone of political life here.

We did oppose them intellectually. But no mass movement, not even a noteworthy political opposition emerged—people left, or were arrested and thrown out of the country. The division of Germany contributed to this situation, which meant that critical thinkers here were always frustrated.

The core of criticism and resistance crumbled repeatedly. It's only now, since the emergence of a mass movement which is associated with the church, with young people who are less burdened by such considerations and guilt feelings—and above all now that Gorbachev is there—that a large opposition movement has become possible.

We always said, amongst friends: If anything is to change here, it will have to come from the Soviet Union, and it won't happen there. I was talking with some Russian friends about it just recently, and they had to laugh, because they hadn't ever thought that changes would come from within their own country either. But in the Soviet Union it's happening through a revolution from above.

For a long time we thought the same thing would happen here, that a group would be formed in the higher echelons of the Party which would introduce reforms in opposition to the old men's stubbornness. But no such group did emerge, and that's why the Party has now collapsed. They failed to make use of the potential

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Kathy Kollwitz/The Survivors

Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945.) Born in East Prussia, she is a celebrated artist particularly for her etchings. When Hitler came to power she stayed in Germany in case vengeance was wreaked on her family.

for opposition within their own ranks. It was there, but it was blocked. They were too cowardly, and now they are paying the price.

Could one sense a lot of tension in the GDR over the past few years? Did people feel trapped?

People fought for certain freedoms in literature and culture, but there wasn't even a hint of that in the economy or in the political process. The population felt shut in, despite the fact that more people were able to travel to the west in the last few years than ever before. The Party leadership had thought of that as a sort of safety valve.

But people didn't want just one finger, they wanted the whole hand. The way people rushed out when the borders were opened shows just how acutely they must have felt themselves to be stuck in a pot with the lid on. Lots of people wanted to get out, wanted to really experience that sense of liberation just by the change of place. In the first weeks people needed to do that. And there was real euphoria then. That's gone now, there's a lot of depression and illness around.

As young people who grew up under fascism we were full of guilt and gratitude towards the anti-fascists and communists back from camps, prisons and exile who had rescued us from that.

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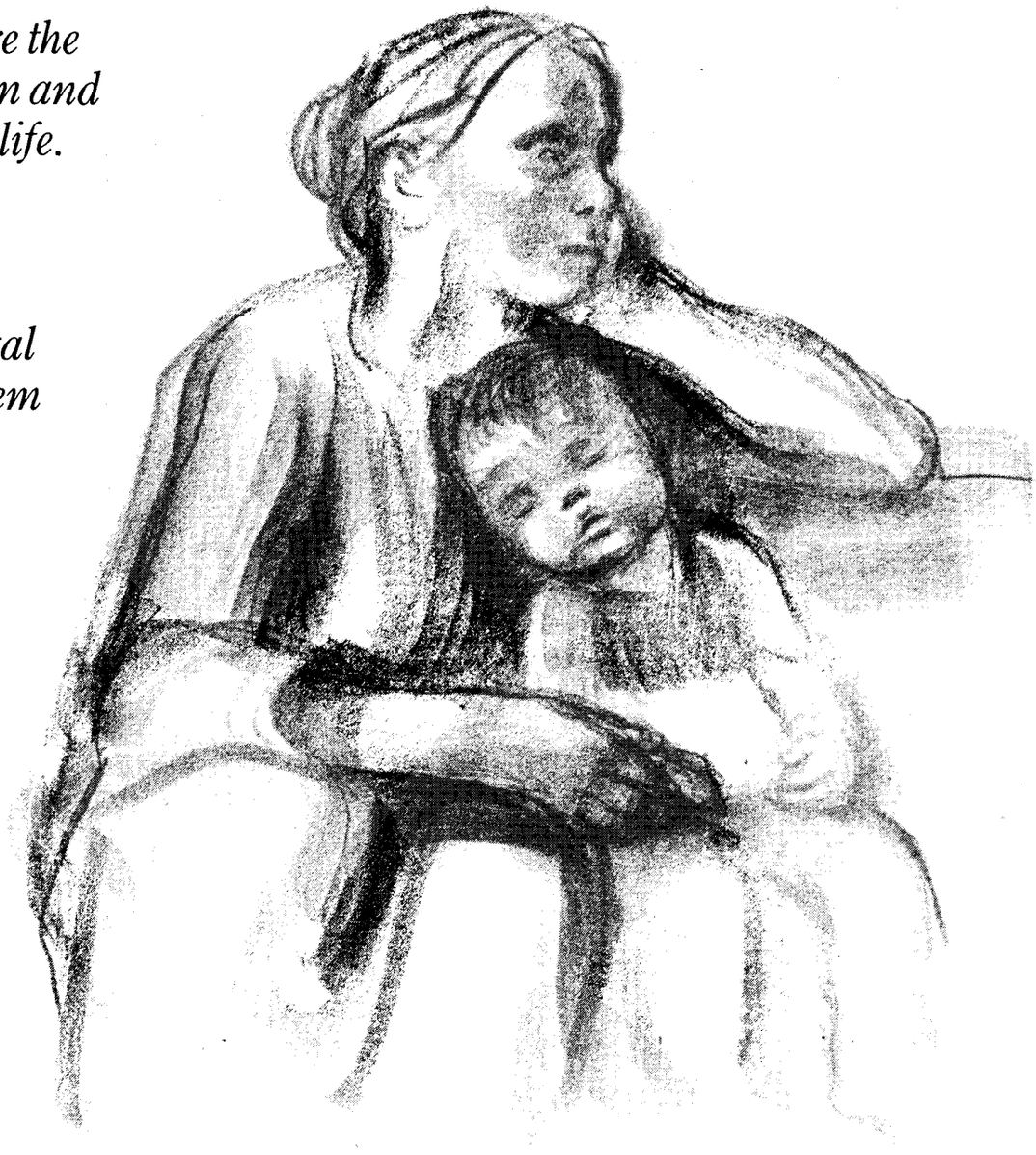
Children are the foundation and ferment of my life. I never understood Simone de Beauvoir's total rejection of them



Kathy Kollwitz/Woman with sleeping child

How do you spend your time at the moment?

For some time I made a big effort to put certain problems down on paper. I wrote several articles, for example, trying to understand why the younger generation found it so easy to leave, and in such great numbers, why they couldn't identify with their country, and didn't go into opposition either, which is another way of identifying.

I wondered: How did they actually feel about their childhood and youth? At school they were forced into a kind of permanent schizophrenia, they didn't learn to think for themselves. I'm still sitting on a committee which is dealing with the security police's violence against demonstrators. Everyday I receive a lot of letters to which I reply. People keep coming to see me, and I go to meetings as well. I haven't had a moment of free time for weeks, at most only in the evenings, but then we watch the news on TV. I haven't seen a single film. I haven't read a book, not a single line, in weeks. It's totally impossible to read anything literary; it's too painful and at the same time too uninteresting. I can't remember this ever happening before in my whole life ... These really are exceptional circumstances in which we find ourselves; all our thoughts and feelings are totally dominated by this process.

Almost all of your books have a reflective woman as the main figure. Her thoughts and recollections structure the work. That's true of *The Quest for Christa T.*, *A Model Childhood*, *Cassandra*, *Accident* and parts of *Summerstück* (*Summer Piece*; as yet untranslated). Why is it that you always end up with this structure?

The funny thing is, whenever I try to write in a different way, it goes wrong. I started to write each book in a new way at least ten times. I'm not conscious of forcing myself to write realistically or objectively or to portray people's lives. When I finally get the feeling that I've found my own voice and my own personal form, it always turns out, when I look at it more closely, to be this same structure. Actually I should know that by now so that I could start writing like that from the start, but it obviously doesn't work that way. I have to go by a very circuitous route before again reaching this thought structure, and very often it's a structure of recollection.

Why do I use that form? I think it's because I can discover most

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about myself that way. That's really why I write: to find out about myself. I come closer to it by a process of association, by trying to become conscious of analogies, by working non-chronologically and asking myself certain questions—although this is of course more tiring and painful. My questions are what structure the book, not events.

That's the way our mind works, isn't it? We carry a thousand things around in our head at the same time.

That's my ideal. It's what I had intended when I was writing *Accident*. I wanted to write in the same way that the mind functions. But the book was interpreted, especially here in the GDR, as a plea for or against nuclear power. Dreadful! What I was trying to achieve by the parallels between my brother's operation for a brain tumour and the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station were prose structures which come closest to the working of the brain.

Of course that's impossible, I knew that too. But that was the problem which really interested me in that book. Of course no-one noticed that.

What strikes me about your books is the continual transition from everyday details to abstract problems and vice versa. It seems as if everything is linked to everything else.

That reflects my development over the past few years. At a time when grand ideologies became more and more dubious and irrelevant and no longer offered reference points for moral values or moral behaviour, ordinary everyday life became more and more important to me. It also had something to do with the fact that since the mid-seventies I have spent part of each year living in the country.

It was some time before I realised the significance of daily structures. Several of my books describe a single day, like *Accident*, and the story I'm working on at the moment does too. This story is about the time at the end of the seventies when the security police stood around outside our door all day long. *Summer Piece* has descriptions of one day in it too.

Your work is also a form of sensual perception.

I have managed, with difficulty, to free myself from the snares of theory which I was caught up in the fifites. On the one hand I wouldn't have wanted to miss out on studying at university, but on the other hand it probably cost me years as a writer. It took me a long time to free myself from the ideological concepts which influenced literary studies at that time.

Quite simply, I realised that I felt better when I made good use of my senses. At first I had to keep reminding myself of it, had to trust in my senses and simply forget all that ideological rubbish. Now I do it unconsciously: I see, hear, smell, taste, feel, see how people move and how I move myself... for that's where it always starts, having a sense of your own body.

What is special about your style is its linking of association and analysis. Isn't it difficult to combine those two forms of expression? The writer Nathalie Sarraute, for example, refuses to analyse. She says to do so would cause a reduction instead of a wealth of words.

I think it's a question of feeling with one's thoughts and thinking with one's feelings. Thoughts and feelings are not separate from one another; every thought is seeped in the feelings I am living through at a precise moment in time. When I'm depressed I think differently, I draw different conclusions to when I'm in a euphoric mood.

But thinking and analysing are somewhat different, aren't they?

Yes, one thinks all the time, but not always analytically. For me, it's like this: I'm often in a confused mood which I find agonising. I feel really glad when I—I can almost say when I find a formula for it, which allows me to recognise and name the mood. Abstract formulations are important to me.

If for example I have a writing block, it's nearly always because—although this too is something I only realise with hindsight—I find it hard to acknowledge certain things about myself. And once I find the courage to overcome this reluctance and to express the insight, it's really easy to write.

Heinrich Böll once said to me: Sometimes you write a whole book in order to conceal a single sentence in it. But if I shy away from that or try to evade it, then I can't write. Then I can throw the lot away.

***Summer Piece* is about a block like that, isn't it? The main character, Ellen, has come out of a difficult winter. In a Mecklenburg village, she gradually loses her sense of paralysis and her creativity returns. It's also possible to read the book as an idyll with menacing undertones. I heard that you worked on the book for a long time, and that its final form only emerged at quite a late stage.**

What *Summer Piece* describes are my experiences in the years following 1975. Life in the country, surrounded by my friends, it was all new to me. It was something many people experienced during that time because it was clear that politics in our country would not tolerate any critical participation. That became clear after Wolf Biermann lost his citizenship, and after the reaction to our protest.

The question was whether we could stay in the GDR. I was undecided for a long time. In fact, we toyed with the other option, that of going. Quite honestly we didn't know where to go to. We didn't feel any other country offered a real alternative. And on top of that, I'm really only interested in this country. The sharp friction which sparks off productivity is something I only experience here.

There were other reasons, more personal ones: I would never have left without my daughters, but they had their families and their lives here. And I still had my very old father who died this year. It would have been the death of him if I had left. And the fact that lots of people wrote to me saying that I was needed here played a large part too. I realised that I would have to put myself in difficult and morally dubious situations, and that's something I often found hard.

I guess it's possible to understand from my books how my inner liberation came about. I still know precisely the time and the place ... when it became clear to me that I would have to leave the GDR if I couldn't free myself completely from all the dependencies which would hamper my thinking and my writing. I also knew that I wouldn't be able to achieve this overnight and that one way of doing it would be to *describe* the process of freeing oneself. And this was something I couldn't have done if I had suddenly upped and left.

It really was like that, that whilst I did still feel a bond, I no longer felt dependent. That's why the situation in our country at the moment isn't so painful for me as for others. I felt the pain much earlier. I felt the sharpest pain in 1968 and then again in 1976, when I realised I still had hope. I was in a bad way for months at that time.

How did you come to write *Cassandra*? After you had dealt with the German wartime past in *The Quest for Christa T.* and *A Model Childhood* and after your work on the German Romantics with *No Place on Earth*, you became absorbed in ancient Greek history.

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That had to do with the circumstances at the time. We feared a nuclear war, and the annihilation of our civilisation. I wondered: Where do the roots of these destructive forces in our civilisation lie, forces which lead ultimately to self-destruction? I went further and further back. Actually experiencing the Greek landscape and seeing the old sites was decisive. I had the location for my story. I was looking for a metaphor for a woman's reaction to that kind of destructive society. Cassandra and Troy provided the models for it.

Does destructiveness arise when people don't have the courage to be themselves?

Where did it begin, men having to be heroes? Being a man is, of course, a misfortune. Or it was until recently. Young men today have other possibilities to identify with, and they are taking them up too. But until recently, men had to choose some form of heroism, whether it be as factory manager or as strong worker. That meant they had to suppress part of themselves. But that's something people don't forgive themselves for. They tried to make others like them so as to be able to live with themselves.

Does destructiveness also have to do with the fact that people live for such a short time? That, in order to give their empty lives some meaning they want to control others and the future?

That can be a motive for it, but the suppression of feelings, especially in men, seems to me to be the key thing. They only feel they are being themselves when they are destructive. It's a tragedy for soliders, for politicians — even for many artists. There, too, destructiveness and necrophilia reign supreme. It would be revolutionary if men could learn to find their security in gentle feelings.

I also wonder whether in the committee investigating the violence against demonstrators we couldn't try to bring together young policemen, who are, of course, ashamed of themselves and don't understand their own actions, with the young people they mistreated. They belong to the same generation. I think something like that will have to happen. How can you end confrontation? By getting to know each other. Then you'll get differing opinions about one another, not on the basis of absurd enemy images which are drummed into one, but on the basis of mutual acquaintance.

You were young when you had your children. How did that influence your writing?

I can't answer that very well, because I just can't imagine a life without children. They were just always there. When they were still small, there was a strong sensual influence. I experience a great deal through touch and smell. I notice it now again with my grandchildren, how many unexpected situations they produce, how it keeps one alive. Perhaps no one has taught me so much as my two daughters, who often made me think things over. For me, children are the foundation and the ferment of my life. I've never understood Simone de Beauvoir and her total rejection of children because they supposedly disturb the development of the intellect.

Many women writers are childless: the combination is difficult.

Yes, it is difficult, I know that from women colleagues too. All of us have shortchanged our children a bit. But I always worked to the limit of my strength, I couldn't have done more. But perhaps I should have done it differently, should have spent more time with my children, as my daughters do with their children now. For our generation, in the fifties and sixties, relationships were subordinate to work and politics. That is taking its revenge now. The children of those parents who were not able to build up a real relationship with them at the time are the young people who are now leaving the country.

You've been together with your husband for 40 years?

Just a minute, is it really 40 years? Yes, you're right, it's true. We met in 1949. Are you asking me how that relationship can still work?

I think a relationship that lasts that long must give you a great sense of security which facilitates writing.

Yes, it does.

You don't write about sexuality.

I don't feel the need to... I feel the same way about it as Ingeborg Bachmann who said that it's something which is between two people. I don't know... we were always caught up in arguments, criticism, actions, our young years were occupied with all that and those were the things which I felt the need to express. The other, love, sexuality, was always there, as a background we took for granted... and I also have a degree of reticence about getting too close to my intimate life.

We were just talking about the significance of the physical and the sensual. Wilhelm Reich says that people who have a satisfying sex life have less of a tendency to oppress others. If people feel good, are autonomous beings and live with all their senses...

Then they no longer write. Writing originates in tension, and in our case social tensions were at the forefront during the past few years. There weren't any serious tensions in our relationship; it was tense, but strangely enough the relationship was never questioned, never under threat.

I don't know what Gerd, my husband, would say, but I need him as a partner very much, not just because of the security, but above all because he knows me so well. Because I can have arguments with him about what I'm writing with the security of knowing that he doesn't intend to destroy me. When you publish a book you always get destructive attacks. But when you've got an exchange of opinions with someone who is often very critical but who you know is someone who wants you to express yourself as completely as possible, that's a great source of happiness. Our daily life is never boring, it's a constant, endless conversation. And then there are the children... I don't think I'd be alive today if it weren't for these people. There have been quite a few critical moments.

Do you think women writers have made a special contribution to literature?

That's a question which is always difficult to answer... I think that women give more of themselves. I have a sense that the literature of our century is hampered by something Ingeborg Bachmann calls "illness", men's illness. You can even call it a curse, a disaster which is not their fault, but which consists in men finding it so difficult to acknowledge their feelings.

It seems simplistic for me to ascribe the difference between men's and women's literature to this... although I must say, in parenthesis, that I often find women's emotional outbursts frightful... those unadulterated, unreflective and unformed explosions of speech... On the other hand, perhaps they have succeeded in preserving something... a faith in subjectivity which possibly helps and which is of use to everyone, male authors included.

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C S Lewis/Hulton Deutsch

Jack's the boy

C S LEWIS: A BIOGRAPHY
A N Wilson
Collins £15

Nicholas Tucker

It's now 27 years since C S ("Jack") Lewis died, but interest in his life and work stays very much alive. His children's stories continue to sell whether as books or as television adaptations on video, and London audiences fumble nightly for their handkerchiefs as the drama of Lewis's short, tragically curtailed marriage unfolds at the Queens Theatre. In America his theological books remain popular and there are now three separate C S Lewis Societies producing regular bulletins. Wheaton College, Illinois—Billy Graham's old university—has a permanent display of Lewis's beer tankards and pipes, together with his writing table and wardrobe that featured so famously in his children's books as an entrance to another world. (Malcolm Muggeridge's portable typewriter is also on view, along with memorabilia from other Christian writers).

But despite this continuing fame, the case for yet another biography is not obvious. Lewis wrote almost compulsively about himself over the years, and there is not always much a biographer can add to this. Many of his books have not lasted particularly well: the science fiction and children's stories are often scrappily written and his brand of pop religion is now seen by many—including the present Archbishop of Canterbury—as greatly flawed. Even his scholarly *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* is sometimes marred by an over-partisan approach in Lewis's typical "Ulsterior" fashion. Finding new, valid meanings today in the work and life of someone who described himself as a dinosaur in his own times is not easy. When the attempt is spread over 300 pages and conducted by an author with the reputation in his own turn of being something of an old or new fogey, optimism does not run high.

Happily these fears turn out to be false. Apart from confusion over the meaning of "fulsome", A N Wilson writes like an angel; he also brings just the right balance of affection and scepticism to his subject. Lewis emerges as a better, nicer man than the blustering, red-faced, ceaselessly proselytising figure described by his detractors. Certainly he had faults: his termly "binges" at Oxford, when drunken undergraduates were expected to chant bawdy songs and verses, are as embarrassing to read about as they were for some of the students at the time. There is also something depressing about a middle-aged English literature don who prefers reading Captain Marryat or R M Ballantyne to any of what he called "the moderns". But in his own field of medieval studies he was a quite outstanding scholar as well as a hard-working, occasionally inspiring teacher—not always the case with famous university names. He was also a great and generous enthusiast. When J R Tolkein read out sections of *The Lord of the Rings* to his friends, it was Lewis who was loudest in its praise. This was sometimes in contrast to less favourable comments from critics like the languid Hugo Dyson, heard to exclaim on one of these occasions, "Oh fuck, not another elf!" But without Lewis's constant encouragement, Tolkein may never have finished his masterpiece at all.

Much of this study is given over to describing Lewis's retarded emotional make-up. This was the result of a long unexpressed and unacknowledged state of mourning for his beloved mother who died when he was nine. In his twenties Lewis found a replacement in a somewhat masochistic relationship with a much older woman. This semi-secret affair was to last some 30 years. Wilson tells this part of the story very well and also shows how these mixed-up needs and desires always played an important part in determining the direction of Lewis's life and work. As someone let down by reality early on, he sought shelter in books instead. Such books, and the imaginative world they both described and stimulated, soon became a substitute for much of life itself, with Lewis always happiest either reading or writing or else talking about reading and writing.

But as the comfort offered by the contemplation of imaginary worlds begins to dim with age, new supports are often needed. Eventually Lewis turned to belief in Heaven as a replacement for the Animal-land he once invented then chose to inhabit as a child. Typically this conversion to Christianity was through his conviction that glimpses of the divine can best be found in reactions to particular stories and poems, rather than through faith or prayer.

As a sexually repressed, backward-looking conservative suffering from arrested emotional development, Lewis stood well in line with J M Barrie, Kenneth Grahame and various others when it came to writing the type of children's

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literature most celebrated during the first part of this century. Within his Narnia stories, childhood is portrayed not as a bridge to maturity but as a cul-de-sac, delightful to inhabit but distressing to leave. Typically his child characters die in *The Last Battle*, so preserving their golden youth for ever in what they discover to be Heaven. All, that is, except for Susan. But as the safely dead Jill points out, this is no great loss. "She's interested in nothing nowadays except nylons and lipstick and invitations. She always was a jolly sight too keen on growing up."

Written in haste, the Narnia books benefited from the author's narrative skill and brilliant use of mythological detail. But unlike the works of Tolkien, they are not books to return to in adulthood. This says more about Lewis's limitations as a children's writer than it does about the children he was writing for. In the same way, his theological books, however engagingly argued, ultimately sell both him and his audience short in their determination to find comforting answers to imponderable questions. To experience the author at his considerable best, it would be necessary instead either to know him or to hear him teach the literature he loved. Those denied what many found to be an exciting privilege can still glean much—though not all—of the man from this excellent, understanding and witty biography.

Glitznost

LABOUR REBUILT: THE NEW MODEL PARTY
Colin Hughes and Patrick Wintour
Fourth Estate £6.95

Sarah Benton

Labour Rebuilt is the gripping narrative of how Labour's leadership has refashioned itself to be the hero who will win the hand of the British people. It is a story of committee rooms and TV studios, of memos, documents and presentations, of the élite rather than (despite the title) the party itself. There are perceptive sketches of these leading actors. We glimpse the object of their desire—the British electorate—in pithy quotations from the portraits drawn by the "communications" experts. Whether these are the heroes or the villains of the tale depends on the reader's views.

The book covers the period from 1983, when Labour won just 28 per cent of the vote, to the end of 1989, when it was reaching 50 per cent in the polls. This is the time when, according to some theories, socialist parties are helpless to avert their death at history's hand. Hughes and Wintour do not take on the argument, but they provide the best evidence we have of how far Labour's leaders have consciously changed their fate. Their detailed reconstruction of how Labour's élite arrived at new policies and approaches is a fascinating and highly readable study of what does lie within the control of leaders.

From the start, the tension between changing a party to fit the electorate, or making the party fit to change society is made clear. An inner group drawn from Kinnock's office (Patricia Hewitt and Charles Clarke) and the campaign and communications team headed by Peter Mandelson acted as both goad and guide to change. It was they, not the conventional intellectuals of the left, who shaped the leaders' perceptions of what needed to change and how to change it. The methods they used were modern (the skills honed in advertising and marketing) and the message they urged was "modernise". This imperative frequently overrode the less organised desire for a goal of more moral substance.

The dramatically improved election campaign of 1987, testament to the shrewd inventiveness of the small team, produced "a triumph of image over substance". And so it went on. For every tear brought to the eye as the Kinnocks ambled by the sea, two jeers came to the lips as Kinnock stumbled and bumbled through Labour's policies. Indeed, the sloppiness of the entire leadership, which never grasped just how much work had to be done, seems beyond belief. For instance, while the party was pledging to cut unemployment (or was it increase employment?) "no preparatory work had been done" and no-one was charged with the task of working out how such targets (whichever they were) were to be achieved. There was the same muddle on tax, on trade union law and, most devastatingly of all, on defence.

Hughes and Wintour give us the first published account of how Labour changed its defence policy. It's a dramatic, sometimes painful tale which gives Gerald Kaufman's brain the starring role. It is an example of what *Labour Rebuilt* does best—who did what, when and why; of where they falter and of what other books will have to explore: why popular politics changed over this period. It is clear that when the leaders left Labour enclaves to talk to other European socialists their grasp of policy options improved by leaps and bounds. That in turn brings home how much the leaders, for all their talk of "turning outwards", were themselves trapped in an internal discourse with members for so long.

Hughes and Wintour will not allay Labour members' fears that Mandelson and his marriage-brokers have too much power. Yet, allowing for their dependence on Mandelson as a source, they also show that no other force in the party was pressing the need for change in as coherent and convincing a way. And they were pressing a message which Neil Kinnock wanted to hear. Above all, this was how his values and the public's could be shown to be "as one", and how he could drive a coach and horses out of the sectarian mire that was his party. What he didn't want to hear was David Blunkett's demand for an "inspirational idea". He always distrusted it. In an illuminating section, they describe how the efforts to found the leadership in "inspirational" aims and values were aborted. Perhaps they show, above all, how professionalism can enhance the performance of a leadership; and how it can also mutilate the unorganised desire for idealism and moral stature.

Darkness into light

THE MIRROR MAKER
Primo Levi
Methuen £12.99

Carole Angier

Happily, Primo Levi wrote for *La Stampa* for over 25 years, so there's still more where this and *Other People's Trades* came from. We may not have to face his death for some time yet.

The Mirror Maker contains essays and—a new element—stories written as early as 1960 and as late as February 1987, two months before he died. There are essays on science and the paranormal, on gossip, on the origins of life, on America. The stories have the same unique mixture of a scientist's method and a poet's imagination, a disabused humour and a respect for everything in the world. They include, for instance, television interviews with a gull, a mole, a giraffe, a spider—all hilarious, and from all of which I learned more than I want to remember than from any real interview (eg how the mole makes his perfect cylindrical tunnels, or how the giraffe swallows—a real problem when you think of it, but I hadn't). But my favourite interview of all is with the ant queen, "virgin aviatrix" turned "widowed mother" in half an hour, "gravid with millions" ever after... Why spend so many hours on sex, she asks the human (female) journalist; indeed, why have so many men? Let them not be born, or put them to work, or "let them kill each other, considering that they have that tendency". (Yet even she remembers that splendid flight, that instance of love.)

In his preface Primo Levi said that he distrusted messages and begged us not to look for one. But there are, at least, important themes. One is the question of optimism and pessimism, on which he is more qualified to write and be trusted than any other 20th-century writer. There is still much darkness here, many traces of the Lager in both essays and stories. The most ineradicable trace seems to be shame: for being a victim (see the story "Force Majeure"), and simply for being human, for belonging to the same race as the oppressor (see the essay "Translating Kafka"). But it is Levi's glory that, with all this, he refuses to despair. "A certain amount of optimism is required," he says, "without which one doesn't accomplish anything and one lives badly." "In my writing... I've always strived to pass from the darkness into the light": and he does. He writes with hope and celebration of the Warsaw Ghetto, of scientific research, of the flight to the moon; he even writes with hope about the arms race, though when he was writing (1981) "The day we shall hear that in Moscow there has been a spontaneous peaceful demonstration... [did] not seem very close." Well, we know now he was right to hope; and even if it all goes bad again we must remember the lesson.

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But there is a second, fascinating theme that seems to run through this particular collection, both essays and stories. So many are about crossing barriers, interpenetrating dimensions. There is an essay about the unexpected ease of weightlessness, and a story about flying. And several stories break down ordinary ideas of space, time ("Time Checkmated"), reality ("The Mirror Maker"). In "They Were Made to Be Together" a couple in a world with only two dimensions join, and have a brief magic vision of solidity. In "Through the Walls" an ordinary solid man dilutes his body until it can pass through stone; but in making love in his new condition he merges with the woman as only the two-dimensional couple could do without dying.

This theme of interpenetration is also in Primo Levi's wonderful introductory poem "To My Friends", which includes us, his readers, and is partly about what reading should be: "Each of us carries the imprint/Of the friend met along the way". He didn't want to give us a message, because a message is one-dimensional, on one plane. But this *is* his message: that reality is not one-dimensional but many-dimensional, and that progress in both knowledge and love is about breaking barriers, opening frontiers, combining.

Flying bears, magic places

Some recent children's books

Nicci Gerrard

"Not that one: it's boring" says my 2-year-old son if I pick up books about "Tommy goes to the dentist" or "Mary goes to the nursery". He likes stories about bears that fly, wild things roaring their terrible roars, green monsters, children having mad adventures and secret places; he likes short rhythmic verses, pop-up books and anything with dinosaurs or food or preferably both. He likes being safely thrilled.

But fantasy, argued the formidable Italian educationalist Maria Montessori whose schools still continue round the world, is not "good" for children. As one of her followers says, "with so much fact that is wonderful in the world, do we need to throw all this fantasy at them?" Yes, reply children. And yes, insist parents, bored silly and made slightly uneasy by some of the social realist instruction manuals lining library shelves.

Which is just as well for publishers of children's books, for fantasy fills many of their beautifully illustrated (and often expensive) pages. Of course, there are still plenty of moral tales being brought out. *Little Monster* (by Barry Wade, illustrated by Katinka Kew, André Deutsch, £5.95) is all about good-as-gold Mandy who is jealous of the attention her badly-behaved brother gets until she realises her parents love them both equally. *Jamaica Tag-Along* (by Juanita Havill, illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien, Heinemann, £6.95) teaches all those boys and girls who, quite naturally, don't like their games being interrupted by younger children that it's nicer to share. Satomi Ichikawa's disgustingly twee *Rosie's Garden: a Child's Keepsake of Flowers* (Heinemann, £7.95) narrates Rosie's stay with her grandmother in the country—nature is called "old Mother Nature", animals are "little visitors" and everyone smiles all the time because they are so happy to be looking after flowers. Most surprisingly, Martin Waddell and Barbara Firth, creators of the glorious *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?*, have brought out a bland let's-all-love-our-pets book with pastel illustrations (*We Love Them* Walker Books, £5.95).

Alongside such dictatorially-decent books are, however, a flood of brightly-illustrated tales of excitement and wonder. Chris Riddell's *When the Walrus Comes* (Walker Books, £6.95), David McKee's *The Monster and the Teddy Bear* (Anderson Press, £5.95), *Walter's Wand* by Eric Houghton (illustrated by Denise Teasdale, Aurum Books for Children, £6.95), Uke Krause's *Nora and the Great Bear* (Aurum, £5.95), all combine simple, speedy plot, fine pictures and a sense of magic, even danger. I'm always surprised by the way in which children take both long, interesting words and hard facts of life in their stride. They aren't generally upset by things that adults worry about. The prolific Ahlbergs (who have a baffling fondness for a fifties world of terry nappies, fathers in soldier's uniforms and mothers in curlers and hairnets) have come up with a story that makes me a bit nervous when reading it aloud—*Bye, Bye Baby* (Heinemann, £6.95) is about a child who's lost his mummy. And not so long ago, John Burningham wrote *Grandpa*—a sad little tale about an old fond man who dies at the end of the book.

One of the inexplicable absences in contemporary publishing seems to be the traditional fairy tale. Walker Books have just published *The Frog Prince* (re-told by Jan Ormerod and David Lloyd, £6.95) but Jan Ormerod's illustrations have an antiquated, pre-Raphaelite feel to them. And one of the gluts is the anthology. Here, the best and the worst of children's books can be found: they can be excuses for books, manufactured things churning out familiar rhymes under tame drawings. *Poems for Pleasure* (introduced by Philip Schofield, Hamlyn, £8.95) contains some wonderful pieces by poets ranging from Shakespeare to Roald Dahl and Roger McGough, but is on the whole a lazy rag-bag. They can also be stunningly well-executed appeals to the child's—and adult's—imagination. The best I have come across in a long while is Walker Books, *Ten Golden Years* (£9.95), a collection of new verse vividly illustrated. It contains a fine rapping calypso by Adrian Mitchell and a lovely little verse by Grace Nicholls:

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"De beat of de drum
is a living heart
De skin of de drum
is a living goat
De wood of de drum
is a living tree
De belly of de drum
is de call of the sea
De dum of de drum is me"

Finally, and usually dismally, comes that freight of learn-to-read books, with thinned-down illustrations and sparse story lines. If anything turned me off reading when I was little, it was the mono-syllabic tedium of Janet and John (the other kind of book I hated was that which had a list of questions at the end, checking you'd been reading it, and in the "right" way). Though not many publishers today give us "John helps Daddy wash the car; Janet helps Mummy wash up", they do often abandon fantastic worlds and linguistic subtleties when it comes to their learn-to-read texts. Instead, many of these books wring as many one-syllable words as possible from a tedious situation: it is learning by dint of repetition: "Don't get lost' 'No, I won't get lost', 'Are you lost?' 'No, I'm not lost'" (from *Tiddler Gets Lost* in the Parent and Child series, Shirley Isherwood, illustrated by Robin Edmonds). Children's books often cease to feed the children's ravenous imagination. Indeed, they seem actually to starve it, making reading not a pleasure, but a task.

Yesterday I was reading to my son and a brief patch of sunlight appeared between the storms. "Do you want to go out and play?" I asked. He was quite cross: "but I *am* playing". Quite.

Just sixteen

Teenage fiction

John Yandell

At the centre of teenage fiction lies a contradiction: read by and written about teenagers, written and marketed by adults. Looking for a particular kind of (linear) coherence to their own stories, adults tend to conceive of adolescence as a staging-post along the road to adulthood; teenagers, on the other hand, are more interested in being than becoming. It often seems as if the self-appointed task of the teenage novel is to tell its readers what they must become.

The message is painfully obvious in *Frankie's Run* (Mary C Ryan, Macmillan Limelight, £3.99). Mary Frances cannot understand why her best friend has developed an interest in boys; her own transformation only begins when an accident with some chewing gum forces her to visit the hairdresser. The main influence, though, is the arrival of a new boy in town, who makes Mary Frances go weak at the knees at the sight of his perfectly-formed nose. You don't have to be a card-carrying Freudian to interpret that one.

What marks this novel out, however, is not the bland assumption of heterosexual bonding—the end which determines all—but the systematic punishment meted out for any transgression against the rules of femininity. When Mary Frances puts her energies into a fund-raising campaign on behalf of her local library, it is made plain that this is merely transference activity, a way of evading her proper concern with Bruce Herrman's nose. Humiliation duly follows when the local paper carries the story: Mary Frances is transformed into "Frankie"—*a boy*. Nowhere is there the slightest hint that the reporter's mistake may reveal more about his stereotyped assumptions than about the heroine's sexuality. The reader is clearly meant to draw the conclusion suggested by Mary Frances's final action in the novel, when she buys clothes for the new school year: "No jeans and no sweatshirts."

Frankie's Run is unusual only in the sharpness of its focus on conventional gender roles. Also fairly typical is the way in which it emphasises the foregrounding of the love/romance interest by pushing any kind of political consciousness (here represented by attempts to stave off the effects of public spending cuts in small town America) to the periphery of the novel's world.

Sometimes the political innocence of the author betrays itself in quite unexpected ways. In *The Girl of his Dreams* (Macmillan Limelight, £3.99), Harry Mazer's unpleasantly cold tale of the love of a long distance runner, a puppy is rescued from the canal where it had been left to die. The dog is promptly, and without a trace of irony, named Zola. As in Budd.

More common is the assumption that teenagers are incapable of political analysis. When such matters are mentioned, they appear as a part of the distant and vaguely absurd world which adults inhabit. In Jean Betancourt's *Sweet Sixteen and Never...* (Macmillan Limelight, £3.99), Julie's father spends his time attending anti-nuclear conferences. When he sends her thousands of pamphlets to distribute, she avoids the embarrassment of handing them out at school by dragging her boyfriend along to palm them off on passers-by on the subway.

Julie's adolescent romance is set against her mother's affair with a colleague from the law firm where she works, but also alongside Julie's readings from the diary which her mother kept when she herself was 16. The diary tells of her mother's foray into Greenwich Village in 1968, her pregnancy and her forced separation from her baby—a story which is itself counterposed to the decision of one of Julie's friends to have an abortion.

These parallel narratives provide Julie's own love story with a historical context. The approach encodes a rather simplistic notion of progress, as Julie's readerly role enables her to learn from her mother's and her friend's mistakes. This nevertheless seems preferable to the decontextualised, timeless version of love inscribed in *Frankie's Run*. It has the effect of presenting Julie as someone who can make choices about her sex life, while also recognising that these choices are often threatened by the weight of other people's conventional expectations.

It is a pity that such insights tend to be undermined by the generic imperatives of the love story. Julie is allowed to argue with her boyfriend about the significance of her mother's pregnancy, but only so that the two of them can later be reconciled. She is definitely not allowed to challenge the assumption that the relationship will progress on the boy's terms and at his pace. The novel may deal with serious issues like abortion, but only inside the sugar coating of romance. Teenage sex is treated like the pamphlets which Julie hands out at the subway.

Perhaps the central figure in Norma Fox Mazer's *After the Rain*(Macmillan Limelight, £3.99) should be grateful her grandfather's impending death makes her put romance on the back burner. But then this fine, sensitive and unsentimental rendering of the experience of bereavement is marketed as a teenage novel merely because its narrator is an adolescent girl.

Whose city is it?

SQUATTER CITIZEN
Jorge E Hardoy & David Satterthwaite
Earthscan £9.95

Jeremy Seabrook

The myths that have grown around Third World urbanisation echo the fear and anxiety provoked in Britain 150 years ago by the spread of London or Manchester: cities are out of control, breeding grounds for crime and vice; monstrous agglomerations of humanity that threaten the overthrow of civilised values.

The authors of this lively and accessible book on what is one of the world's major environmental problems, are both more temperate and more hopeful. For one thing, the UN prediction of only 15 years ago, that the earth would be overwhelmed by megacities, is not going to happen. There won't be 40 million people in Mexico City by the year 200, but "only" 25 million; Calcutta will "stabilise" around 16 million. Having said that, a rising proportion of the inhabitants of such cities are living in illegal squatter settlements or subdivisions of existing properties. Governments are at last realising that the urban poor are not encroachers, but are the best designers, builders and creators of their own living space. Traditional western models of town planning, inherited colonial notions of legality, inhibit the poor from using their creativity to provide for themselves: they simply cannot afford to live in public housing schemes. City governments are now providing basic amenities to squatter communities, rather than sending in the bulldozers (although this still occurs, especially in places where the poor occupy land that is needed for more urgent purposes, like commercial buildings or apartments for the rich). The surest way to make use of the energies of the poor is to empower local governments, devolve more resources and

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make them more accountable. This is a long way from the centralising tendency of many governments—not all in the Third World.

The authors dispel other stereotypes: urban bias is in reality bias towards the rich. They insist that patterns of urbanisation defy generalisation: the way cities grow is determined by cultural, local, traditional characteristics. Promoting smaller urban centres doesn't mean simply building desolate industrial estates in the middle of nowhere, but requires that such cities become the focus of dynamic economic activity. This has implications for rural land ownership, and demands that prices paid to local farmers for their crops are sufficient to stimulate supportive industries and services. The spread of agribusiness and ranching merely disemploys more rural people and sends them to seek refuge in distant cities.

Of course, there are horror stories. In Shanghai, the rain is so acid that it burns holes in nylon shirts. Delhi has absorbed over 100 villages since 1900. The population of Nouakchott has increased 40-fold since 1965. Because the urban poor must endure lack of water and drainage, sites polluted or contaminated by toxic wastes, or live on hillsides liable to landslips, they are the absorbers of vast unseen costs of "development" that are elided by existing accounting-systems.

Apocalyptic predictions may be exaggerated, but the growth of cities does create increasing shadows of blight and resource-stripping in their hinterland: they exhaust water supplies; nature can no longer process their pollutants. Whether they break down in chaos depends upon whether those in power heed the recommendations of this book which, unusually, manages to be both informative and wise.

Nature's lottery

WONDERFUL LIFE: THE BURGESS SHALE AND THE NATURE OF HISTORY
Stephen Jay Gould
Hutchinson Radius £14.95

Steven Rose

Certain phrases are so commonplace we scarcely stop to consider their implications. How easily terms such as "the evolutionary tree", "the evolutionary scale," trip off the tongue, giving force to the belief that all of life has been a progression towards its ultimate summit of perfection: humans, or in the common usage, "Man". The use of the term "evolution" in such an ostensibly scientised way masks the fact that the idea of the continuity of life, ordered hierarchically in a great chain of being, long predates Darwin. It is intimately part of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, absorbed into science via the work of Linnaeus in the 18th-century.

Yet the idea of evolution as linear, or even sparsely branched progress, is profoundly misguided. So too is the suggestion that any living species found today is "more primitive" than any other. Clearly all living forms evolve and today's amoeba is no more the "primitive forebear of Man" than are humans themselves; it is the evolved descendant of that primitive forebear, just as we are.

If we must represent evolutionary sequences diagrammatically, a highly-branched hollybush is a better model than a poplar tree, as Stephen Gould reminds us at the beginning of his new book. So humans are but one tip of one set of branched twigs on the bush, no more the endpoint of evolution than any of the other myriad twigs. But are we, large-brained, bipedal, social organisms, nonetheless an inevitable product of evolution? In Gould's metaphor, which occurs again and again through this splendidly assured text, if one could wind back the tape of life a few million years and replay it, would it repeat, and human-like creatures as well as all the other present-day life-forms, emerge once more?

Latter-day heirs to the Judaeo-Christian great chain of being, like many sociobiologists, would be inclined to say yes; adaptation is the key to evolutionary success, and adaptive pressures through natural selection have forced the best available choice onto living forms. So, too, would another school of biological thought, working in the structuralist tradition, who claim that there are exact laws of form, determined by physical forces which limit the range of shapes available to organisms. For the first school, evolution is Whig history written by the hand of nature, for the second the study of evolution is of merely antiquarian interest.

Wonderful Life is concerned to refute both these positions, not by theoretical argument alone, but by a detailed discussion of the discovery and interpretation of an astonishing set of fossils discovered in 1909 high in the Canadian Rockies by CD Walcott of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. Odd though the organisms he found were, Walcott, in accord with prevailing evolutionary thought, shoehorned them (Gould's phrase) into a sequence which made them primitive forms of presently living arthropods. Over the last 20 years the Burgess fossils have been re-evaluated by the Cambridge-based trio of Whittington, Conway-Morris and Briggs. And they were forced to the conclusion that they are representatives of a vast mass of species, families and phyla which have no extant living descendants at all. They are astonishing creatures of wildly varied forms; one has five eyes, another seven spike-like legs; one is so weird that it has been named *Hallucigenia.*

Gould is himself a paleontologist and his own joy in the unfolding drama would carry along even those least turned on by old rocks. But of course there is a much deeper lesson to be learned from the Burgess fossils. There is no evidence, Gould insists, that these creatures were any less well-adapted to their environment than those forms which did finally survive—and indeed their great diversity suggests that evolutionary history is one of the winnowing of species rather than their proliferation. These organisms failed to leave descendants, he claims, through the merest contingency, the accident of history. If we wound the tape of life back to when these shales were the mud above which multitudes teemed, and then replayed it, it would be in the highest degree unlikely that we would arrive today at anything recognisably like our existing life forms—including humans.

Far from being the mechanism of ordered transformation along a great chain of being towards adaptive perfection, evolution is a lottery in which winners and losers are determined by forces over which they have little control. Nearly everything is possible; what survives, including ourselves, confirms the truth that nothing in biology makes sense except in the context of history.

Gay Messiah

KINGDOM COME
Bernice Rubens
Hamish Hamilton £13.99

Martyn Harris

This is the story of a gay Messiah. His name is Sabbatai Zvi and he is born, the son of a poor poulterer, in Smyrna on the coast of Asia Minor. The date is 1626.

There are rumours about him at once, for the day of his birth is the Ninth of Hav in the Jewish calendar, the anniversary of the destruction of the Second Temple and the day, according to Jewish tradition, when the Messiah will be born.

The rumours grow in strength when his mother reports that the baby smells of angels, though others detect about him a whiff of sulphur. The child is precocious, a prodigious scholar of the Torah, the Talmud, and even the forbidden Kabala. When he is credited with the miraculous recovery of his grandmother, the stories about him spread around the Jewish communities of the Mediterranean, to Leghorn, Cairo, Constantinople, even to the ghetto Jews of Poland. The Saviour is at hand and in Constantinople even the Ottoman Sultan quakes.

Sabbatai's story is also the story of a dozen other false Messiahs who appeared around the Jewish world in this period of pogrom and fast expanding communications. What Bernice Rubens explores in this very fine and subtle novel is the web of hopes and deceptions, both personal and social, which conspire to create a myth.

Sabbatai's mother, and two of his brothers are convinced of his divinity. His father and younger brother, while devoted to him, are stolidly sceptical. Sabbatai himself is an hysteric, a liar, a pretentious manipulator and a secret voluptuary. Sometimes he believes in his role, sometimes he sees himself as a mere puppet pushed towards martyrdom by the passion of others for redemption. "Those people had led him on, seduced him into saviourhood, connected him with miracles. Their *will* to believe was so sublime it needed no proof, no hard and fast evidence."

Sabbatai indulges in homosexual orgies, he

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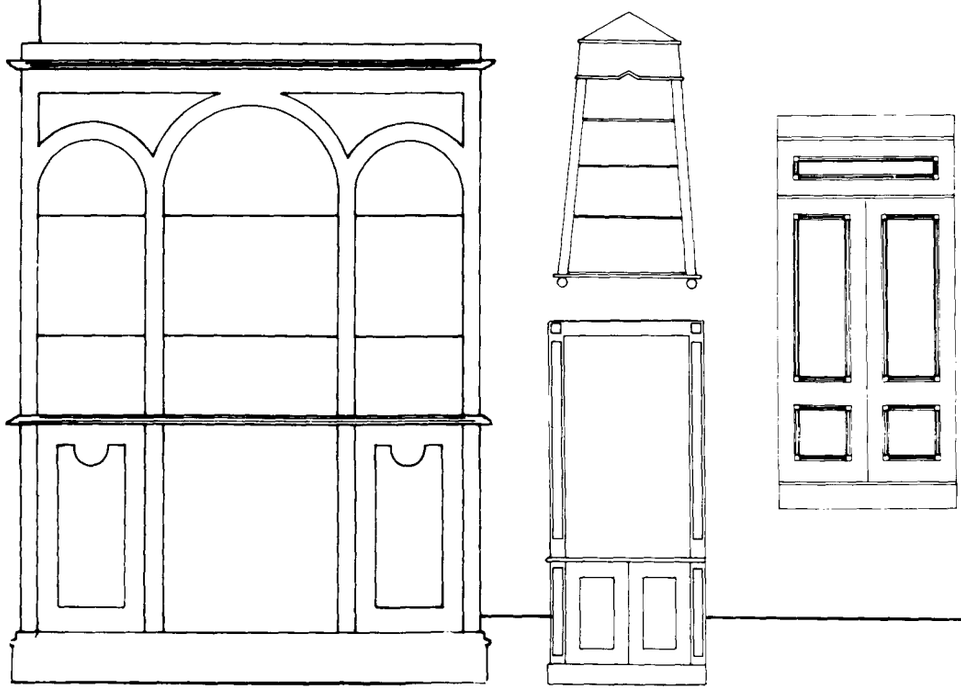

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marries a prostitute and likes to sniff her body when she returns from her whoring. He eats pork and connives in the production of a forged prophecy of his birth—a "live sea scroll". He even abandons his faith and takes the Islamic turban when threatened with martyrdom, but even so his followers believe in him. Even more remarkably—you *still* believe in him just a little.

At the crisis of the book his father, Mordecai, who has never believed in his son for a moment, turns on the rabbis who persecute him and damns them for their lack of vision, their banality and their frigid logic: "My son *is* a god of a kind," he screams—because Sabbatai at least has had the courage and imagination, and perhaps madness to deny his mortal destiny.

On one level the burden of being a Redeemer is an echo of the burden of being a Chosen Race with all its weight of history and suffering. "I would be rid of my past once and for all," says the disciple Saul, "I would be rid of the Jew in me". More broadly still, and this is what gives the book its general significance, it is also the burden of being human. Did I choose this body, this face, this family, this character, this destiny and this death? Could there, perhaps, have been some terrible mistake?

Curmudgeonly genius

VLADIMIR NABOKOV: SELECTED LETTERS 1940-1977
Dmitri Nabokov and Matthew J. Bruccoli (editors)
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £29.95

Sean French

Among the more than 400 letters reproduced in this outstanding collection, there are eight that were written for publication in the *New Statesman*. Characteristically, Nabokov corrects a mistake in the Russian language used in an advertisement, submits a chess problem of his own composition, defends his edition of *Eugene Onegin*, argues with V S Pritchett about Pushkin's grasp of English, continues the row with Edmund Wilson over Wilson's portrait of the Nabokov marriage in his memoir *Upstate*, demands an apology for an insulting aside in a book review and offers the word "faunlet" as a male equivalent of his coinage "nymphet".

The sustained energy of the man is extraordinary. Apart from some earlier examples at the beginning, included to elucidate the circumstances of Nabokov's family, these letters cover the period of Nabokov's life from his move to America in 1940 to his death at the age of 78 in 1977. During this period he was earning a living principally through teaching, book reviewing and occasional translating. In the time left over he also carried out research in lepidoptery while writing some of the major novels in English of the post-war years.

Nabokov compartmentalised his life and only occasionally are there hints of one activity impinging on another. In 1951 he wrote a letter to an editor at *Life* magazine describing his butterfly-hunting: "When collecting, my general system is to go by car to this or that locality which may be a bog or a mountain pass or the shore of a lake or the beginning of a trail leading to alpine meadows. I do not care to camp out but usually stay at one of the good motels which abound in the west." And the reader suddenly remembers that it was his lepidoptery that

These letters show Nabokov as the supreme literary professional

helped Nabokov's research of America on the road that was so important for *Lolita*.

Nabokov has always seemed in almost every sense the most practical of authors. Elsewhere he wrote that as a prelude to his academic career in America "I fortunately took the trouble of writing 100 lectures—about 2,000 pages—on Russian literature, and later another hundred lectures on great novelists from Jane Austen to James Joyce. This kept me happy at Wellesley and Cornell for 20 academic years." These letters show Nabokov as the supreme literary professional. Like a brilliant juggler he balances literary editors, publishers, translators and, in his later years of success, agents and film producers. Where the integrity of his texts are concerned, nothing is too much trouble. There is a ferocious letter to his Swedish publisher about their "mutilated and worthless version" of *Lolita*, based on Nabokov's own reading of the Swedish. The arguments over unsuitable book jackets would fill a small volume of their own. The most memorable concerns Nabokov's professional criticism of the drawing of a butterfly, concluding with the magisterial dictum: "I have nothing against stylisation, but I do object to stylised ignorance."

In fact this collection unavoidably emphasises the curmudgeonly side of the author. Anger was what most often drew Nabokov away from the lectern on which he wrote his novels. To Edward Weeks, editor of *Atlantic Monthly* and one of the most powerful literary editors in America, he wrote: "Your letter is so silly *and* rude that I do not think I want to have anything to do with you or the *Atlantic* any more."

But there are playful moments. I loved the letter to Harold Ross, the editor of *The New Yorker*, recalling a previous meeting: "I came all the way, across some hilly country, to the anniversary reception at the Carlton last March and said to you (in allusion to our indirect meetings through Katharine White in all kinds of verbal jungles): 'Dr. Ross, I presume?' You said you were not a doctor."

This is a fascinating, highly enjoyable book but not—and especially not at this price—one that should come high on a Nabokov reading list. But for those who have devoured all the great man's fiction and his brilliant criticism, it will be a sumptous, unexpected bonus.

Partial eclipse

HOWLING AT THE MOON
Paul Sayer
Constable £10.95

Wendy Brandmark

"Tell me about human acquisitiveness... What part of you is pleased by 'collecting' things?" Michael Crumly challenges his wife as she cleans her thimble collection. But he is the one who confuses love with possession, who destroys what he cannot contain. Michael and Susan Crumly lead a quiet, insular life in a working-class London suburb gradually being gentrified. He's set up his own business as a graphic designer; she's a secretary in a financial company. Despite their class differences, their marriage has been a smooth one; they have plenty of money; they've agreed not to have children; they've always discussed their differences.

But Michael is disturbed by Susan's pregnancy and her decision to have an abortion; his unease, his sense that she has become a stranger, deepens into paranoia about her supposed infidelities; while she finds that her choice of freedom brings guilt, a regression into childhood. Their past—his anger at his mother's adulterous affair and second marriage; her lonely days as only child of a wealthy, loveless marriage—overwhelm their complacent life together. As if the years since their youth no longer exist, they confront each other like angry children but with the weapons of adults.

Paul Sayer won the Whitbread Award in 1988 for his novel about a psychiatric hospital, *The Comforts of Madness*. His second book is a cool, almost clinical study of the dissolution of a marriage and a descent into madness. Michael's breakdown is convincing and at times terrifying, but the prose lacks the tension and lyricism of his first novel. Sayer tends to categorise rather than describe the people, shops and streets of London, and the writing is not helped by some unfortunate metaphorical language: "the late summer days oozed away", "wind groaning like a loveless old whore". Colour, taste and smell have been drained from the life of the prose, and although this may mirror the alienation of the two characters from their surroundings it does deaden the novel, so that at times it reads like a case history whose conclusions have been determined from the outset.

There's something too about the loveless, plastic, materialistic world Sayer creates which distances us from the book and the dilemmas of his characters. We understand why the marriage was bound to fail and the logical progression of Michael's sickness, but we never feel that Michael and Susan's fears and inadequacies, and the moral turpitude of their society bear any relation to us. We know the world is more interesting, more vibrant, more dangerous, more ugly and more beautiful than Sayer's bland vision of London in the 1980s. This is a compact little book which does not in the end admit us, a novel defeated by its own lethargy and despair.

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Enemy of the people

Chaos keeps Public Enemy going and, Mark Sinker argues, paranoia keeps them powerful

Ronald Grant

People's enemy with an uncertain mission: Flavor Flav from Public Enemy

Ever since hiphop emerged, with its stuttering electric rhythms and street-poetic declamation, as the chosen form of expression of black youth, its internal shifts and squabbles have acted as a microcosm of the broadest and deepest social tensions shaping both black and white communities.

When the New York hiphop group Public Enemy put out the song *Fight The Power* last year, as part of the soundtrack to Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing*, and then as a single, leader Chuck D was looking forward to a summer shocking hostile interviewers by claiming that Elvis was a racist. In the event, he spent it failing to convince till-then sympathetic observers that fellow Public Enemy member Professor Griff wasn't.

Griff already had a reputation for statements disgraceful and bizarre, particularly to the UK rock press. But an interview given to a black writer for the *Washington Times* had made that paper's front page in June, and everyone else's in the weeks that followed. Its low point came when Griff blamed the Jews for "the majority of wickedness that goes on across the globe".

For a while, in the ensuing furore, the group looked set to split. The other members were furious with Griff. Even he didn't believe what he'd been saying, they claimed: hurt by an unspoken decision to distance Public Enemy's work from his ideas, he'd succumbed to pique in the worst way possible, unleashing a spiel of objectionable nonsense just to get back at the others.

Chuck D, embarrassed and angry, lashed out in every direction but the right one, correctly insisting that you couldn't combat racism if you were yourself a racist. He still refused to banish the impression that to him Griff's anti-semitism *wasn't* racist.

If this was simply a case of an ignorant pop star mouthing off and getting the rubbishing he deserved for it, it would not have churned up the trouble it has. But Public Enemy have interlocked noise, rage, hype, glamour, and the raising of a new African-American political consciousness more effectively than anyone in the history of popular music.

They've brought together young black and white audiences in unprecedented numbers. Themselves smart college kids from comfortably-off homes, their fans often from very much more deprived backgrounds, they've forced a connection between black American middle-class and underclass perceptions.

Where other hiphop groups have bragged and postured, and been absorbed in pop's consumer mechanisms, Public Enemy have developed an effortless facility for generating slogans, for condensing sophisticated political intervention into headlines, taglines, titles, oral-kinetic call-and-response routines and mocking slogans. They've taken the moribund political language of black nationalism and given it all the energy and addictive ambiguity of rhythm and popcult soundbyte: "Bring the Noise"; "Don't Believe the Hype"; "Black Steel in the Hour of

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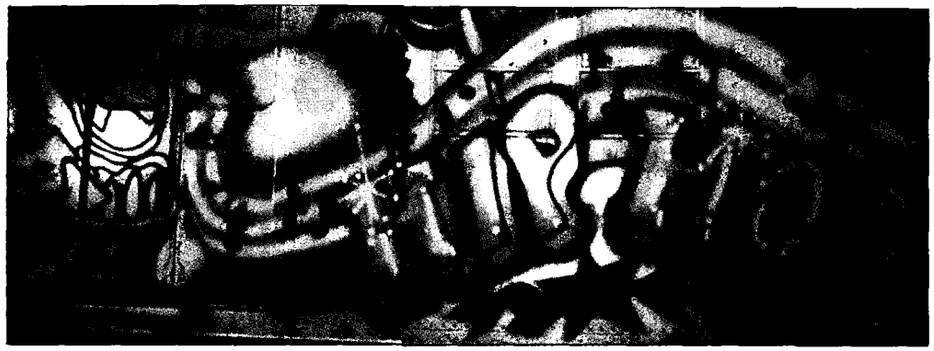

Chaos"; "Prophets of Rage"; "Fear of a Black Planet"; "Welcome to the Terrordome".

"Terrordome", the recent single, plunges the listener into Public Enemy's world: Chuck D rap-rants, a diving, twisting stream of exhortation, justification, commentary and invective, beyond instant sense, as half-remembered fragments of earlier pop and rock clamour are gunned relentlessly past him. The chorus, though, is plainspeaking: "Welcome to the Terrordome! Come on down! Get down!"—America seen as a mutant cross between a videogame SF-warzone and a 24-hour game show, a city of dreadful spectacle-by-night, operated without licence or let-up.

The insistently memorable title had become the New York undergrounder's standby cliché when its imminent release was still only a rumour. But as it was catching everyone else's attention, another scandal broke. Four buried lines gave implied credence to a centuries-old anti-semitic lie, that the Jews were Christ-killers: "Crucifixion ain't no fiction/So-called chosen frozen/Apologies made to who pleases/ Still they got me like Jesus."

You had to be reading closely, but even an enraged B'nai B'rith (the Jewish Anti-Defamation League) would not match Public Enemy's enthused fans in the minuteness of their scrutiny. You had to note that Chuck D's delivery and brutal poetic elisions make the reading a matter of interpretation; his deft hard wit packs more meanings (often contradictory) into fewer words than any of his rivals.

You had to wonder, in fact, if the rapper's identifying himself with crucified Jesus didn't deflect some of the historical sting—it has the ring of a joke misfiring. But you also had to admit that this was the first hint of a taint that had spread from off-stage into the body of their work. It was one thing for Griff to harbour his crazed opinions; quite another for these to become official Public Enemy broadcast.

Public Enemy's "Terrordome" is a late 20th-century wasteland, as chilling as Eliot's, but urban and blasted—many poor areas of American cities have remained rubble since the sixties' riots. Slivers of past and future burst out of each other into a pop avant garde of colliding opinions and dissidence; cultural heritage reborn as horror cartoon; lurid images that get their immediacy from America's popcult past.

Ever since Grandmaster Flash's "The Message", hiphop has functioned as the main bulletin board for the black underclass. Furiously cross-referential, bluntly committed to the word as its elemental motor-force, it has grown increasingly ambitious in its drive to map this landscape of violently simple struggle between good and evil, which has evaded the best attempts of pre-pop narrative and/or political journalism to describe it, only perhaps charted in Kathy Acker's bleaker reaches.

Recall that Jack Kirby, creator of every *Marvel* hero from Captain America to The Hulk, born of German-Jewish immigrant parents on the Lower East Side before the first world war, grew up to the same poverty, gang-violence, race wars and underclass depression that faces Public Enemy's modern audiences. The darker side of Kirby's urban melting pot mythology—ordinary folk mutating into demigods to combat evil—has been given militant African-American inflection. Nine out of ten hiphop names could just as easily have been caped superheroes—Terminator X, KRS-1, Just-Ice, Doctor Dre, Code Money.

Public Enemy have raised demons that charge their work up far beyond ordinary popcult importance: to say the unsayable, on behalf of a silenced minority. Traces of conspiracy theories in the semi-public subconscious are batted about, crushed together into a furious chaos united only by rhythm, making their immaturity more than half a strength.

At a practical level, they face constant bannings and demos—release of the third LP *Fear of a Black Planet* has been postponed over and over again. They raise questions about rival holocausts: just why are the histories of the middle passage and slavery still kept out of political debate? If their assault (and their appeal) can be reduced to a single question, it's this: Why is our history not being talked about?

All the right questions, all the wrong answers? The submerged hostility between Jewish and black communities in America is a fact—one that needs confronting. If surfing the malign energy of racial defamation is Public Enemy's way of punching entry into a still segregated media consensus, it also makes it easy to lump their howled questions together, to dismiss them as the ravings of the paranoid.

Chaos keeps Public Enemy going, and paranoia keeps them powerful, but both are eating into their souls and their brains. When and if *Planet* appears (scheduled for April), it's likely to become the most closely studied pop artefact ever. That's some burden; nothing so far suggests that they'll shoulder it like adults. It's at least arguable that, so far, their incoherent teen-ego irresponsibility has done more good than harm. As long as they don't make a career out of it.

Art

Voices from the regions

Artists are either from the "south" or "north", says Stephen Daniels

Many famous English painters are identified with particular regions: Constable with Suffolk, Turner with the Thames Valley, Lowry with south Lancashire. This identity is seldom seen as restrictive. Indeed Constable, Turner and Lowry are seen to portray features of national identity: England as a green and pleasant land, as a maritime power, as the workshop of the world.

The identity of Joseph Wright (1734-97) has been yoked more tightly to his native Derbyshire, not a region many outsiders now relate to, if only because it falls between images of the "north" and "south". Wright is the only major English artist whose name is inseparable from a locality. He was labelled "Wright of Derby" by reviewers in his own time to distinguish him from another Wright from Liverpool, but long after all other Wrights have been forgotten the label has stuck. This has been a source of pride to the people of Derby (the city's gallery has an unrivalled collection of his work), and a source of disdain to generations of London connoisseurs. The Tate's current exhibition of Wright, the largest and most comprehensive yet, offers an opportunity to reassess his regional identity.

Wright's regionalism is based on certain features of his life, his circle of patronage, his subject matter and style. He did chose to live in Derby most of his career and famously quarrelled with the London-based art establishment of his time. But his horizons were broad. Like any other aspiring English artist he visited the classic ground of Italy and he exhibited at London venues other than the Royal Academy. Wright's circle of patrons was much wider and more varied than the progressive group of Midlands scientists, merchants and industrialists he is conventionally identified with. It included most ranks of polite society, from many places. Wright's patrons ranged from Josiah Wedgwood to Catherine the Great.

The scenes of science and industry for which Wright is most famous form only a fraction of his output. Moreover, as recent Wright scholarship has shown, these are not so much faithful transcriptions of Midlands' enterprise, as vehicles for general moral and religious concerns. The style of Wright's nocturnes, based on brilliant lighting effects, was peculiar to much English painting, but reaches beyond the confines of the Royal Academy to Rembrandt and to 18th-century theatre. Wright enjoyed a good reputation among London reviewers for such nocturnes and among a larger audience for the engraved versions. Wright was provincial but could scarcely be called parochial.

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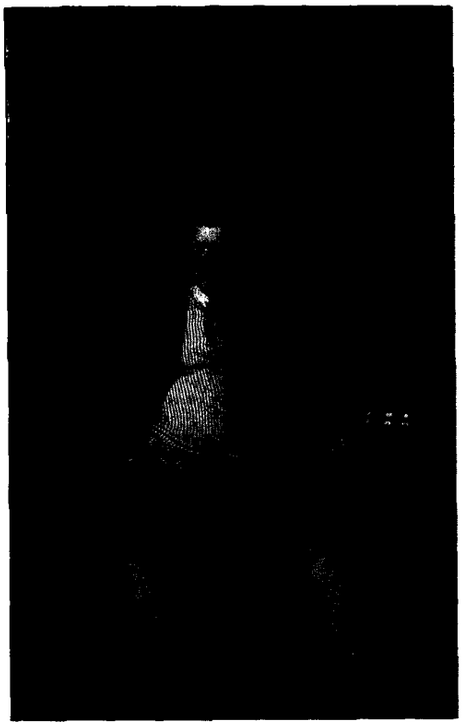

Above left: Joseph Wright portrayed Sir Richard Arkwright as a national icon. Above: Wright's "The Girandola"—he did as many landscapes of Italy as Derbyshire. Left: Arkwright's "Cotton Mills by Night".

We can open out Wright's regionalism by focusing on his landscapes and his scenes of science and manufacture. Wright did as many landscapes of Italy as of Derbyshire, but these do not form separate territories in his work. They are connected through ancient history. The Peak District is framed by classical allusions to the cliffs of the Roman *campagna* and the caverns around the Bay of Naples. Italian landscape in turn is framed by Derbyshire, by its exemplary geology.

Matlock Tor, a recurring motif for Wright, was the site of a pioneering geological study by his friend Joseph Whitehurst. This established the volcanic origins of this part of Derbyshire and by extension, he argued, that of the whole earth. Wright portrays Whitehurst preparing his geological section of the site, a smoking volcano visible through the window. In another picture Matlock Tor glows like molten lava. Wright's views of the Peak District resonate with his views of crater lakes in Italy like Nemi and Albeno, of the spectacular eruptions of Vesuvius (he did over 30 versions), and of the volcanic firework displays in Rome.

The voluminous, sometimes explosive quality of Wright's landscapes suggests that it was air as much as light or fire which preoccupied him. It is remarkable how often pneumatic power is signified, if not embodied, in many of his paintings: in bellows, bubbles, inflated bladders, bursts of gas and flame, in the bloated figure of Richard Arkwright, in deflated prisoners in airless dungeons, in the suffocating bird in the air pump. Air was more than mere matter to Wright's scientific contemporaries. It had poetic, political and also religious implications. The bird in the air pump may be the most haunting image of the holy spirit in British art.

Wright's link to the "industrial revolution" is as strong as his link to Derby. It was forged by Francis Klingender in his 1947 *Art and the Industrial Revolution* and was recast 20 years later by Benedict Nicolson. Now, in these "post-industrial", self-consciously cultural times, the "industrial revolution" seems less the hard, provincial, irresistibly progressive movement it did to a connoisseur like Nicolson or to a heavy-metal Marxist like Klingender. What characterised the "industrial culture" of Wright's time were complex exchanges between various practices, some of which might seem to us rational and progressive, some not. In Wright's art, science and manufacture are in dialogue with alchemy and antiquarianism. The setting for these exchanges is theatrical, from the "chemical theatre" of the medieval alchemist praying for spiritual enlightenment to the scenes in modern forges so reminiscent of settings for the nativity, the radiant ingot in place of the holy child.

Wright's art assumed a national identity too. It was precisely during his career that brilliantly lit, theatrical spectacle was harnessed for patriotic purposes. Arkwright's cotton mill, glowing in its valley, may have volcanic allusions, but it would also have reminded viewers of peep show prints of national monuments like St Paul's, perforated to let in light from a lamp behind. And Wright portrayed Arkwright himself as a national icon, in the image of John Bull.

The current exhibition coincides with the rehanging of the Tate's main galleries and amplifies its ideology. "Regional voices," we are told, "are more widely recognised in the art world," not as coy expressions of English parochialism but as contributions to wider, international movements. The exhibition shows Wright as a painter of international stature. It is too soon to say whether it will raise the status of Derbyshire.

Wright of Derby is showing at the Tate Gallery, London, until 22 April.

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Television

Raiding cultures

Rosalind Brunt on Thatcher's nice children from the south

Out of the old game formulas and into—Adventure Entertainment! The team that gave us *Treasure Hunt* and Anneka Rice in the eighties now presents **The Crystal Maze** (C4, Thursdays at 8.30pm) compèred by Richard O'Brien, creator of the seventies cult *Rocky Horror Show*. Ballyhooed as *the* game show of the caring-sharing nineties, it offers no competitiveness, no yukky consumer prizes, no "come-on-down" type audience. Instead it's about "adventure"—but of a cool and modishly European sort, without the brash razzmatazz of American formats.

Crystal Maze is a French TV concept that comes with the accretions of culture and civilisations. It's played out in four environments or time zones: Aztec, medieval, industrial and futuristic. Herein old world sophistication swallows up the new with games based on puzzles, labyrinths and lateral thinking, designed in homage to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Bladerunner*, computer games and the Gothic, Umberto Eco and Edward de Bono.

But raiding cultures to make a cultish show is a risky business. Are the contestants equal to their environments? How does the home audience join in? *Crystal Maze* contestants are called Adventurers. They have a set time to solve one task from a choice of four categories—physical, mental, skill or mystery, and return with a crystal or risk being locked in the playing space. But, uniquely, they play for, not against, each other—taking turns in the spaces, egged on by supportive teamwork from outside.

In the first show the six Adventurers were mainly in their early twenties (the cut-off point is fit-and-forty), southerners, white and individually identified as an assistant manager of a golf club, self-employed, a recording artist, a chiropody student, an Operation Raleigh member, and a company director, Ken, the team captain. These were Thatcher's children of the luckier sort with a recognisable Anneka Rice-type niceness.

But from an audience point of view they came over as just too likeably samey to identify with. Far be it for me to bemoan the end of competitive individualism, but how is a viewer supposed to participate in the caring and sharing?

The attraction of game shows based on rivalry is that you sit at home rooting for particular people. You dispense an imaginary largesse based on a moral schema of who "deserves" to win or lose. Competing individuals take on representative qualities as "the only woman", "the pompous know-all", "the one who reminds me of...".

Well, I thought Louise from Operation Raleigh seemed a good egg, especially as the other two women were rather shrinking violets. But in the whole hour I didn't really get to *care* what happened to any of these generally amiable Adventurers. Probably I'm the wrong market for this show, but suppose its own targeted age-group also has problems with partisanship and involvement, what's then left is the games themselves and the compère.

Given that all game shows need time to establish their rules and create familiar rituals, it's unfair to base too much on initial impressions. But because camera positions weren't very flexible in the first show, it was frustrating working out what the games were actually "about"—especially when they were left unfinished as Adventurers rushed to avoid getting locked in. So even a reliance on the old "beat the clock" formula often fell flat. And after each game there was a sort of milling-about anxiety with the compère asking, "What shall we do now? What would you like to play next?"—a gesture to egalitarianism that actually contributed to further loss of momentum.

The Crystal Maze implies a postmodern disdain for naff formats based on build-up, climax and progression and each time zone offers similar types of tasks. So how is excitement and tension created? Mainly through music and shouting. The show is carried by its wizzy theme music and "your genial guide", flamboyantly manic Richard O'Brien, very fit although well over 40, who adopts camp acting styles and a range of different accents and outrageous asides to keep the show on the move. In the process, he totally eclipses the Adventurers, who are left to make feeble panicky noises or banal "go for it, Nick" sounds of encouragement.

All game shows are pretty authoritarian. But for audiences, the enjoyable part comes when contestants strike back—check the compère and get a bit of business going. For a show with non-hierarchical leanings, *The Crystal Maze* hardly seems to be encouraging its Adventurers to stooge, let alone sparkle with repartee.

Perhaps it can still learn a trick from *the* game show of the seventies, the bossiest of the lot: *The Generation Game* which returns, revamped, later this year, with Bruce I'm-in-charge Forsyth. Now there's a man who knows something about combining authoritarianism with lots of love and camp momentum. And as for establishing rapport with both contestants and audience, didn't he do well?

Flamboyant maniac Richard O'Brien: your genial guide for "The Crystal Maze"

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Comment

The beat goes on

Kathy Acker on friendship, art and violence

I want to talk about something which just happened to me, though I usually have no desire to devote this space to personal matters. I was chatting on the phone with a close friend. When he began asking me about my work and the relations between my writing, myself, and media representation of the two, as he has previously, I became upset and tried to change our conversation's course. Finally, I had to tell him that I was crying and that I had no idea why.

After further conversation it became clear that I had been remembering what had happened to me in England this summer. And before. Despite and perhaps due to the tremendous and usually derogatory media attention which I, more than my work, had received in English media, I found myself, in a time of personal trouble, isolated, with no one to help me. Until the last 15 minutes I had blocked out conscious knowledge of what had happened. What I want to talk about in this column is friendship. Friendship, art, and, as a minor issue, violence.

Less than a week ago I had the honour to be part of a benefit for a painter, considered by many here to be both a great painter and teacher, who now has Aids. Twenty five varied artists, including Dennis Oppenheim, James Nares, and Patti Smith, donated work to be sold in order to set up a benefit fund for Carl Apfelschnitt. Carl does not have private medical insurance and in the United States there is no NHS. After the art auction, writers including Patrick McGrath, Dennis Cooper, Gary Indiana, and Lynn Tillman and musicians including David Johansen performed in another art gallery in order to persuade Apfelschnitt's patrons to contribute more money.

This benefit occurred under the aegis of the Giorno Poetry Systems' "Aids Treatment Project". In 1987 John Giorno, a poet and performer who has been producing compilation records of poets, novelists, rock'n'rollers, avant garde musicians, and performance artists for many years, held an Aids benefit in the Beacon theatre at which many of the artists he had recorded, such as William Burroughs, Debby Harry, and Laurie Anderson, performed. Simultaneously Giorno began asking those who did work on his records to donate their earnings to the Aids Treatment Project. Some of the artists who have done so are Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, Diamanda Gallas, Lenny Kaye, Meredith Monk... The complete list is much longer.

In the past the money collected by Giorno's Aids Treatment Project has gone to groups such as The Association of Hispanic Arts, an organisation devoted to educating the New York City Hispanic community about Aids through arts projects; God's Love: We Deliver, an association that delivers food to housebound people with Aids. Money has also gone to individual artists with Aids who, as is too often the case in the United States, cannot afford to buy private medical insurance and are not covered for such by any industrial organisation or union.

In one way, Giorno's Aids Treatment Project is just a drop in a still too-small bucket. AMFAR, one of the largest fund-raising consortia, boasts Elizabeth Taylor as its chairwoman. Visual Aids, an organisation started two years ago by art workers such as John Perrault, last year persuaded 700 art spaces throughout the United States, including the Metropolitan and Guggenheim museums in New York City, to shut down or show only art connected with Aids on 1 December, or to donate the profits from that day's art sales to Aids organisations in order to draw attention to the realities of Aids.

Giorno's organisation, unlike these larger ones, deals usually on a one-to-one basis, directly, in the community, with those who have Aids. Friends are enlisted, not to save, for those who have Aids as yet cannot be saved, but to help to ease the lives of their friends.

From England, too often, the New York City art world looks like a collection, not a community, of individuals whose innovative, radical often controversial, often only chic work has "made it". We all know what "make it" means: it means "gets them what all of us want". In New York City, this same collection of individuals, plus many others, are seen to form networks of communities, of people who have been friends for years.

They, we, have to do this. New York City life is rough. An understatement. For the past few months, packs of youths have been walking the streets, busting into and stealing from every prosperous store they see, beating up folk at ramdom.

Two days ago, a pack hit my gym and when some of the well-muscled men on the premises bashed them against doors and threw them out, the youths pulled knives and used them. In the city, street violence is on the increase. Alienated relations have developed and developed into a society of dark-age tribes, none of whom speak similar languages. Try explaining to a crack mugger that he can keep your money, but you really do need your motorcycle key.

If this were the only public violence, it could perhaps be, not bearable, but dealt with. Worse than drug violence is the violence of the government. One example: The City owns some of the real estate. ABC No Rio is, or more precisely, has been, one of the most important spaces for visual and performance artists whose work is not yet established. Three days ago, some city employees blew up the boiler of the building in which ABC No Rio is housed and almost asphyxiated a theatre group who was then rehearsing in their premises. Immediately after, the city condemned the building. Since it has been condemned, the building, like the building next to it, can now be sold to real estate entrepreneurs for condo development.

In this city, an artist must not only have friends but also be friends in order to survive. Is radical violence a proper reason for the existence of friendship? Strange logic is proper for the last days of post-capitalism. And someone's beat goes on.

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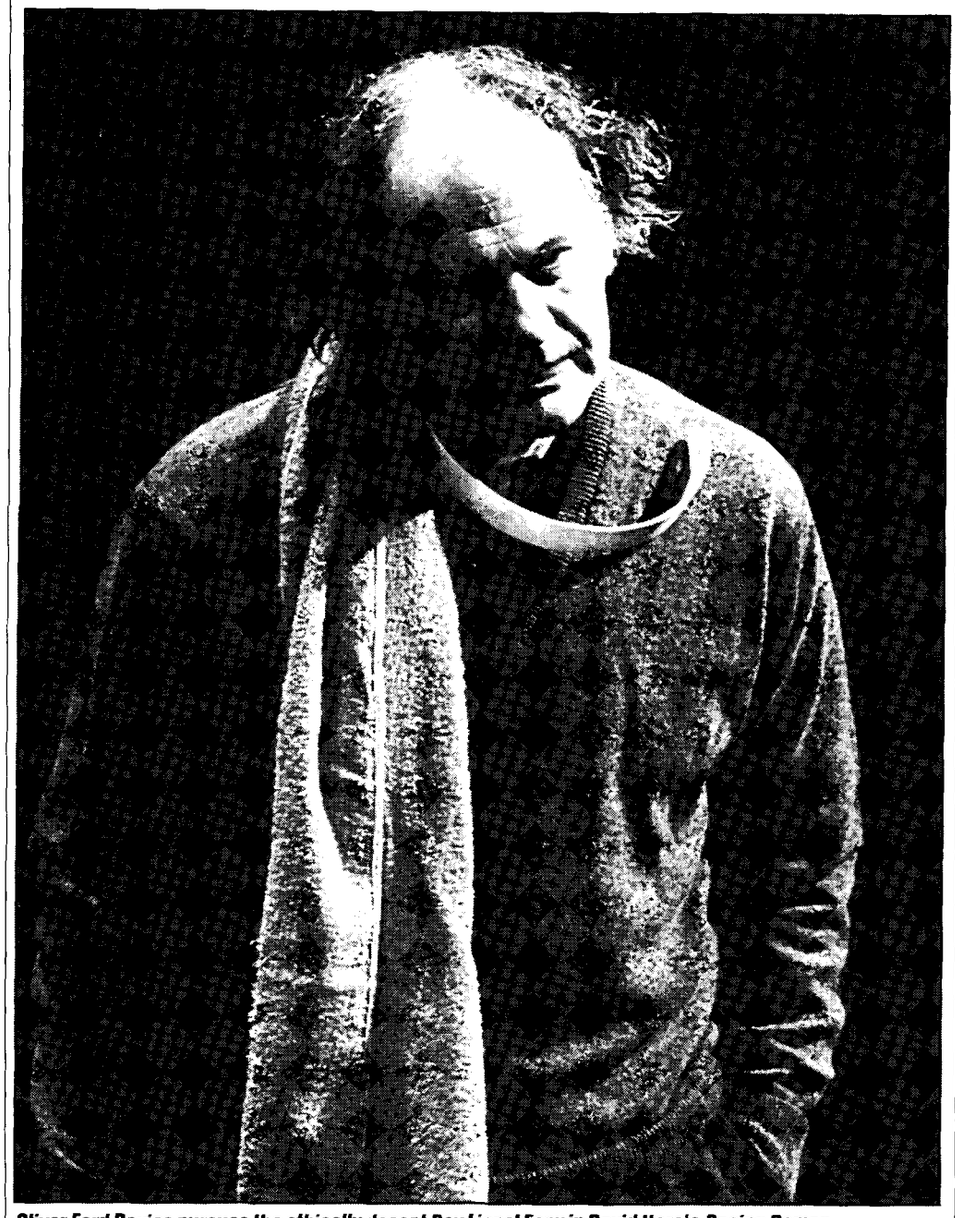

Oliver Ford Davies pursues the ethically decent Rev Lionel Espy in David Hare's *Racing Demon*

Theatre

Born again

Douglas Kennedy on a search for England's Mission

Jesus is back. Thanks to the wholesale revival of evangelical Christianity in recent years Jesus has been re-established in the public consciousness as one serious dude; a Messiah who offered believers the ultimate deal—a sense of spiritual purpose in temporal life, followed by the guarantee of eternal life in the world hereafter. And as most born again Christians readily admit, the most beguiling aspect of their spiritual rebirth was the fact that it offered them such a profound sense of certainty. The certainty of having a saviour in whom they could place responsibility for the course of their lives. The certainty of having His unconditional love. And, of course, the certainty of being afforded non-stop post-mortem service to the Kingdom of God.

Granted, such spiritual security was not acquired by merely asking Jesus to become their Lord and saviour. They also had to "walk the Christian walk and talk the Christian talk". Or, to put it another way, they had to attempt to be *Christly*.

But what exactly is *Christliness*? To a born again fundamentalist, Jesus's doctrines—as revealed in the Gospels—must be obeyed to the letter of the law as they are the one true ideology for mankind, and must be foisted upon the world in order to save it from eternal damnation. To a liberal theologian, on the other hand, Jesus's essence can be found in the way that his teachings provide us with the supreme example of how we should ideally treat each other on the planet. Christliness, therefore, is expressed by the manner in which we conduct our day-to-day existence.

These two disparate interpretations of Jesus's role in contemporary life have sparked off conflicts and schisms in just about every operative branch of the Christian faith. And it is these two opposing visions of Christliness which are at the thematic centre of David Hare's remarkable new play, **Racing Demon** (currently showing at the National Theatre). But though Hare's play ostensibly concerns itself with the Church of England's struggle to rediscover some sense of relevance within society today, it ultimately addresses an even larger spiritual question: what, if anything, is the pertinence of the Christian message in late 20th-century life?

For the Reverend Lionel Espy—the central protagonist of Hare's play—the answer to that question is straightforward: "Christ is in our actions". To him, his work as an inner-city London priest is all about the pursuit of ethical decency in a harshly compromised world. But expressions of decency, as we all know, have largely fallen on deaf ears during the past ten years of British life, so it's not at all surprising that Lionel's bishop (a staunch traditionalist) looks upon him as the worst sort of nannyish liberal imaginable—wracked with self-doubt, disinterested in the sacramental side of his work, and clearly someone who no longer "has the Gospel in him".

No wonder the bishop is scheming to sack Lionel from his parish. And no wonder he's taken a shine to the Reverend Tony Ferris—Lionel's young, evangelically overpowering curate. For Tony is a walking stick of pious gelignite. He's someone who hasn't simply adopted Jesus as a spiritual leader, but as his very own commandant in the sky. And, as one of his fellow priests points out, Tony has succumbed to the most dangerous of theological temptations—the illusion of action; the belief that a priest is a failure unless he essentially force-feeds the Gospel to anyone who strays across his path. Doubt, to his mind, is a major sin—so he naturally despises Lionel's humanistic, anti-evangelical approach to parish work, seeing in it a troubling lack of certainty when it comes to recognising Jesus as the solution to all temporal problems. And he's willing to destroy Lionel's life in pursuit of his zealous view that "Christ came not to bring peace but a sword"... and that people must be forced to believe, in order to be saved.

Hare has set off on an expedition into the sort of doctrinal country that can be dramatically treacherous, not to mention long-winded. Yet what is so impressive about *Racing Demon* is not only its immaculate craftsmanship (for this is an exceedingly well-made play); rather, it is also Hare's ability to grapple with questions like the need for doubt in religious faith, and turn it into the stuff of compelling theatre.

Then again, as he proved in *The Secret Rapture*, Mr Hare is exceedingly astute at investing plays-of-ideas with forceful dramatic energy. And in *Racing Demon* he has written a most original and potent examination of the search for "vocation" in an England that lost its own sense of mission so long ago it can't remember what it was any more.

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Film

Fears made flesh

Suzanne Moore on the unwritten rules of romance

What is it about lonely hearts ads, apart from the name, that turns people off so much? I've had many a conversation with people who talk about little else but wanting a relationship, but who start spluttering when I make the practical suggestion of putting an ad in a lonely hearts column. It seems that in this sophisticated age we still want to kid ourselves that romance is something entirely "natural". But what could be more artificial than all those sickly valentine cards?

In fact, most of us meet our lovers through everyday situations, whether at work or through friends or, these days, in supermarkets. But then the unwritten rules of romance— especially for women—involve undercover work. We go to enormous lengths to just "bump into them", to accidentally turn up at the same place wearing our best clothes. Acting "naturally" is more difficult in these situations than winning an Oscar, but we all pretend.

To advertise for sex or love or both blows the cover on this collective pretence and makes us decidedly uncomfortable. Or, in the case of Harold Becker's new film **Sea of Love**, decidedly paranoid. *Sea of Love* heralds the return, after four years, of Al Pacino as Frank, the hard-bitten New York cop, going through a mid-life crisis. Frank drinks and discusses the breakdown of his marriage while examining the latest male corpse in a bizarre series of murders. All the victims have been men who advertised in lonely hearts columns so Frank, and his buddy Sherman, start looking for a woman with a penchant for bad poetry and a grudge against men. They eventually cook up the ridiculous scheme of placing an ad themselves, meeting various "ladies" and getting their fingerprints on a wine glass.

If we are to believe that this is what policemen do, then we really shouldn't be suprised at the vast numbers of unsolved crimes. On one of the dates Frank meets Helen (Ellen Barkin) a woman who talks about animal attraction, which is presumably why she ends up with a cop. Inevitably he falls for her, at the same time, suspecting her of the murders and the film proceeds to play this ambiguous relationship for all it's worth.

Much has been made of the sexual chemistry between the two lead players and here Pacino reminds us once more of both what a good actor he is and how short he is. Barkin has to take off her heels for the sex scenes to put her on an equal footing, so to speak. Nevertheless, her ugly duckling transformation continues; she has gone from playing downbeat wives to fully-fledged sex symbol.

That the clothes often look very forty-ish—pencil skirts and shoulder pads—seems no coincidence since she is set up from the beginning as a classic *femme fatale*. That the aggressively sexual woman who threatens the very order of things, who emerges out of the shadows to an almost *Jaws*-type soundtrack, should reappear at a time when the image of the family is being revamped in Hollywood, is not a coincidence either. And this film, which has been a smash in the States, has obvious comparisons with *Fatal Attraction*. In the days when sex can kill, active and healthy female sexuality is often portrayed as life-threatening. Frank's fascination for Helen is fuelled by his knowledge that she may be truly dangerous. After all, in Hollywood's eyes women who take any sexual initiative are all regarded as *suspects*...

A more accurate comparison for *Sea of Love* would be *Jagged Edge*, another horribly insidious film where a successful and independent lawyer falls for a man she knows may be a killer. Though *Jagged Edge* at least has the benefit of a taut plot compared to *Sea of Love*'s wholly and, at times, ludicrous script: there is a daft, sexy supermarket scene in which Barkin squeezes a yellow pepper suggestively while Pacino follows her around with his tongue hanging out. Apparently supermarkets have replaced singles bars as hotbeds of sexual promise.

But *Sea of Love* is reminiscent of *Fatal Attraction* in that it's very easy to read it against the grain right from the beginning—to willfully identify with the woman who is marked as deviant, as "unnatural". In spite of all the meticulous work done in film studies on the complex and fluid nature of unconscious identification processes, who can deny the pleasure of *consciously* identifying with the villain of the piece? Just like all those women who cheered inside at the scene in *Fatal Attraction* when Glenn Close, after spying on the cosy domesticity of Michael Douglas's home life, throws up on the grass outside, so too in *Sea of Love* it's quite possible to hope that Ellen Barkin is in fact going around blowing men's brains out.

Even Pacino's character admires the directness of his imaginary murderess, acknowledging that maybe women have reason to be angry with the way men treat them. This symmetry, or empathy, between the hunter and the hunted is a device used over and over again in this kind of thriller. And so, in the mire of male banter that is shown in this film, who can resist smiling at the line: "There is some psycho woman out there who is killing guys?" That serial killers are invariably male and not female is yet another bitter distortion of the truth.

But then *Sea of Love* is one more exercise where men's fear and loathing of women doesn't simply distort the facts but manages to overturn them completely. Its sleight of hand lies in its ability to, on the one hand, expose male paranoia and, on the other, deny it. It legitimises Pacino's paranoia because we don't know until the end if the woman he is with is actually the killer or not. Thus, male fears are made flesh, focused on the body of one particular woman. Sex and danger merge into one. "For if a woman is prepared to seek out sex," this film seems to say, "to be honest about what she wants and doesn't want, who knows what else she might do?" Who indeed?

Ronald Grant Collection

Top: Barkin and Pacino in "Sea of Love"; bottom, Close and Douglas in "Fatal Attraction"

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Agenda
Sat 24 Feb

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Meetings

FABIAN SEMINAR. Social Policy for the 1990s Michael Meacher MP (Labour's Social Security Spokesman). Professor David Piachaud (LSE and adviser to last Labour government). Tues 6 March 1990, House of Commons, 6.30 pm, Committee Room 20.

Holiday/Travel

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EASTER ART STUDY SPAIN 8 – 22 April. Comprehensive 'live-in' art program - beginners + advanced. Beautiful, unspoilt surroundings. Summer also booking. Tel UK: 0923 857760.

USA SUMMER JOBS: ranches, resorts etc. Directory listing 50,000 jobs in W.H. Smith etc. or £8.95 from Vac Work, 9 Park End St, Oxford.

SUMMER JOBS DIRECTORIES. Abroad or Britain in W.H Smith etc. at £5.95 each or from Vac Work, 9 Park End St, Oxford.

CUBA 1990. 16 day holiday. Hotel b/b. choice of resort. From £539. Ashley Holidays. 35 Wood Lane Wickersley Rotherham Yorks. S66 0JT (0709) 543626.

Announcements

MEN DESERTED BY THEIR SPOUSES. Tonybee Hall University Settlement would like to receive experiences, comments, research. Write in confidence to Box (07) 079.

Therapy

ACUPUNCTURISTS AND HOMEOPATH (medically qualified), physiotherapist and dental surgeons offer their services in treatment centres in Putney and near Marble Arch. For Appointments, telephone: 788 8735.

PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUP – ongoing. N.W. London. Tuesday evening. Contact Christine Embleton on 062882 8139 or Werner Prall 01-451 3607.

CHILD ABDUCTION: Research officer offers assistance to women who have been tempted. Please contact Mark Law. Tel. 0223 64785 (anytime).

Personal

SPERM DONORS required for Lesbian couple. Contact through third party only. Please write to Box (06) 067.

Heartsearch

AMERICAN JOURNALIST, 40s, sardonic, funny, sensitive and sane, seeks like-minded woman for laughter, mutual discovery. Box (06) 065.

ARE YOU FEMALE, warm, affectionate, intuitive, tactile, but also uninhibitedly yearning to be totally physically and sexually wanton? Loving friendship offered - young 40s man, nonsmoker. Please reply to Box (05) 043.

ATTRACTIVE MALE ACADEMIC (35) seeks intelligent, articulate lady of any status or age for intellectually, emotionally and possibly erotically stimulating lunch-time meetings. Regular meetings without attachment if compatible. (London). Please write to Box (05) 048.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL, woman - 40s seeks kindred spirit under 55, to share music, literature, conversation and other pleasures. South West area. Please reply to Box (07) 069.

WIDOWER professional, N/S, retired, leftist, still learning, seeks slimish woman for warmth, travel, growth, and more, London Kent area. Write to Box (07) 070.

MIDDLE-AGED (LATE) LAWYER. Well-travelled internationally reasonably intelligent, kind, considerate. Yorkshire area seeks relationship with slim lady any age or status. Please reply to Box (07) 071.

LADY FROM SINGAPORE on a years visit to England would like to have a loving and lasting relationship with a single, marriage-minded, non-smoker man aged between 35 - 45. Lady is cultured, attractive, tertiary educated and financially independent and naturally prefers someone who is equally successful and perhaps from a public school background. Will relocate anywhere with the right person. Please reply with photo to Box (07) 072.

CULTURED CARIBBEAN GENTLEMAN 43, London based with Humanities background seeks outward looking unattached female for homogenous relationship. Hobbies are dancing, music and travel. Write to Box (07) 073.

ATTACTIVE, CONFIDENT, artistic woman (40's) seeks psychologically sophisticated man. Please reply to Box (07) 074.

WOMAN, 40ish, seeks intelligent humorous, non-smoking man to share time at weekends. East Midlands. Please reply to Box (07) 075.

SINGLE WOMAN, 37, (son 5) South West. Doesn't believe there are any kind and funny men (30 - 45) to share walks, cinema, politics, books. Prove me wrong? Reply to Box (07) 076.

CAMBRIDGE - BASED arts graduate, 29, wishes to meet new friends with broad arts, especially music, interests. Write to her Box (07) 077.

NEO-RENAISSANCE WOMAN (40's) seeks understanding enlightened man (40's – 50's) for enjoying Art, music, opera, travel, (sailing?) together. Confidential. Write to Box (07) 078.

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 01-739-1645.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU need Volunteer Advisers. If you are practical, quick thinking and understanding - we'll provide the training. This can help you to develop self confidence and new skills. It is rewarding work being part of a team helping people. We require advisers to work for 2 sessions equalling 10 hours per week. KCABS has a policy of equal opportunities and as such encourages all applications regardless of sex, gender, sexuality or disability. Contact:- Janet Nelson or Gail Broome 949 6506 or write to Citizens Advice Bureau, Blagdon Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4AF, for an application form. (easy access by BR on Wimbledon Line).

FULL TIME VOLUNTEERS are needed now and throughout 1990 to help people with severe physical disabilities to live independently in the community. No experience needed – just enthusiasm, flexibility and sense of humour. Free accom., all bills paid, an allowance of £40 p/week and valuable work experience. Friendly and supportive environment. For further information contact Sue Denney at SHAD, Selby Site, Selby Road, London N17 8JN, or ring 01-885 5569.

DRIVERS urgently sought by Westminster Association for Mental Health. Also other opportunities to work as volunteers including one-to-one work with people struggling to overcome agoraphobia. Training + support given plus all expenses paid. For further informtion contact Diane O'Callaghan on 969-2434 at W.A.M.H. 526 Harrow Road, W9 3QF.

EXPERIENCED PERSON, 39, male with teaching research administration exposure having masters degree in Social Work seeks volunteer assignment with a social welfare service project secular/Christian, location immaterial - can travel. Respond to A. Solomon 95, Mount Joy Extension, Bangalore 560 019 India, tel. Bangalore 622535.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED - If you are fit, with a sense of humour, can drive, have 4 - 6 months to spare and would like the experience of caring for a disabled person full-time in his own flat and can start in July/ August, then I have a vacancy for you. Volunteers receive £37 per week + £12 entertainment grant monthly + free accommodation. For more details contact: Alan Soffert. Tel: 01-736 8555. West London Area.

LOBBY TO SAVE THE NHS - March 1st. Volunteers are needed urgently to help organise this national lobby, including publicity, admin. and work on the day. Expenses paid. Please contact Lindsay River at Health Rights, Bon Marche Building, 444 Brixton Road, London SW9 8EJ, or ring 01-274 4000. ext. 377.

BUILD A Relationship & Watch It Grow. Some children have no-one else who really listens to them. Some have little contact with a positive male figure. Join our volunteer group, men & women, and get to know one of these children. If you are interested, live within reach of Islington, and have 2/3 hours a week to spare, contact Span on 01 250 1223.

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears three times a week on Thames Television at 6.50pm approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

This week on Thames Help we are looking for volunteers.

Tuesday 27th February - Lingfield Hospital School

Lingfield Hospital School in Surrey is home for 240 young people between the ages of 5 and 19 with severe learning difficulties - mainly Epilepsy. The School is set in 250 acres and has its own medical block, classrooms, art and craft rooms, swimming pool and 17 residential homes where the young people live. Volunteers are needed to help in all aspects of the School's work and also to take the young people out. The School will welcome all volunteers, skilled or otherwise.

Ring after the programme on 01-388 8282, or write to:
Lt. Col. Chew, Lingfield Hospital School, St. Piers Lane, Lingfield, Surrey, RH7 6PW.
Tel: (0342) 832243.

Wednesday 28th February - Disability Information Service

Disability Information Service (DIS) is based in the Out Patients Department at St. Mary's in Paddington. The service specialises in helping people with disabilities with any problems they might have in claiming benefit. Volunteers are needed to help run the service, and training is provided.

For more information ring after the programme on 01-388 8282 or write to:
Mercy Jeyasingham, Disability Information Service, Out Patients, St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, London W2. Tel: (01) 706-0543.

Thursday 1st March - Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP)

Tonight on Help we visit a Tea and Chat session in Brixton which Mabel Carter's volunteers help out at every week. All Mabel's volunteers are over the age of 50 and work with all kinds of people in many different situations. The scheme is looking for many more volunteers and co-ordinators like Mabel, throughout the Thames area to start new projects or expand on existing ones.

For more information, ring 01-388 8282 after the programme or write to:
Janet Atfield, C.S.V., 237 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9NJ. Tel: (01) 278-6601.

THAMES TELEVISION

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

NICARAGUA HEALTH FUND urgently needs committed help with data entry one day a week to keep the mailing list up to date. Small friendly office near Oxford Circus. Travel Expenses paid within London. Ring Joy or Sarah on 01 580 4292.

VOLUNTARY Support Workers wanted one evening a week for group of ex-psychiatric patients in Tottenham area. Group provides friendship and a variety of activities: discussions, music, poetry, outings, socials etc., For more information tel 01 366 5078.

VOLUNTEERS with administrative, financial and managerial skills and experience needed to help in the administration of a large and expanding Volunteer Centre in Bury St Edmunds. Please write to Peggy Taylor, Co-ordinator, Bury St Edmonds Volunteer Centre, 22 Hatter St, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 INE.

WAR ON WANT is appealing for volunteers to help with their London-wide Street Collection on Saturday 24th February, which is aiming to raise £10,000 for development projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Anyone who is willing to help should contact Rob Moye on 620-1111.

PLEASE!!! We need your help. Could you build a rewarding relationship and befriend a person with a learning difficulty? We need volunteers to help our service users to lead a normal life. They like an evening in the pub, and a game of darts, a trip to the cinema, a concert or a football match. Anyone willing to spare one evening a week on a regular basis. Any age, male and female. We have a shortage of men in the 40 - 55 age group. Anyone interested in escorting and attending an evening class, or befriending a mother with a 6 year old son. Give me a ring on 01-556 3445.

INTERESTED IN BOOKS? Countries of the South? The largest book aid charity in Britain sends nearly 700,000 books a year to schools + libraries in developing countries. We need help to pack books - requires enthusiasm but no previous experience. Friendly atmosphere and worthwhile work. If you can offer help, contact: Margaret Gardiner at Ranfurly Library Service, 2 Coldharbour Lane, Camberwell, London SE5 9NR.

VOLUNTEERS: sought by the West London Day Centre for homeless and rootless people - if you are considering voluntary work and would like to know more, why not attend a free training day? Please telephone Andrew Thomas on 01 402 5468. Drive, flexibility + commitment required.

N. IRELAND Children's Holiday Scheme is a dynamic Reconciliation organisation working with disadvantaged Catholic and Protestant young people. The summer holiday programme needs volunteers to work in a challenging but rewarding environment. Residential Training weekends organised in England during March and April. Write to: NICHS, 547 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 3BU. Tel: (0232) 370373.

COUNCIL FOR HOUSING Young People (C.H.Y.P) needs male and female residential volunteers to work with young homeless people aged 16 - 21. C.H.Y.P. provides accommodation & support to young homeless people to help them towards independent living. Minimum of 6 months commitment required. For further details contact: Ann Marie Manning at CHYP, 171 Wilton Street, Glasgow G20 6DF (041 946 9207). An interest in young people and enthusiasm for this challenging role are our basic requirements.

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Statement by the International Committee for the Defence of Salman Rushdie and his Publishers

A year after the death threat issued by the late Ayatollah Khomeini, Salman Rushdie remains in hiding in fear for his life. His publishers continue to be subject to a campaign of intimidation.

By lawfully exercising his right to freedom of expression, Mr Rushdie is committing no crime. However, during the last twelve months, there have been at least a dozen attacks on bookshops. Booksellers in the United Kingdom have reported numerous death threats. Similar threats have been made to Mr Rushdie's publishers and supporters throughout the world. In spite of this, we note a drift in the climate of opinion towards viewing Mr Rushdie's plight with acquiescence and complacency.

We wish to restate that it is the right of all people to express their ideas and beliefs and to discuss them with their critics on the basis of mutual tolerance, free from censorship, intimidation andviolence.

On the 2nd of March, 1989, over 1,000 of Salman Rushdie's fellow writers around the world signed a statement which appeared in 62 newspapers and journals in 22 countries. The signatories unequivocally supported Salman Rushdie's right to freedom of expression and repudiated the death threat. The principles at stake remain unaltered. Mr Rushdie's fate affects the freedom of us all.

We call upon world leaders and all those in positions of influence to renew their efforts to end the persecution of Salman Rushdie and his publishers.

The signatories below represent a selection of internationally known writers who endorse this Statement:

Jovica Acin (Yugoslavia)
Knut Ahnlund (Sweden)
Aziz Al-Azmeh (Syria)
Brian Aldiss (UK)
Tariq Ali (UK)
Reza Allameh-Zadeh (Iran)
Ted Allbeury (UK)
Eric Ambler (UK)
Martin van Amerongen (Netherlands)
Mulk Raj Anand (India)
Philip Attenborough (UK)
Margaret Atwood (Canada)
John Banville (Ireland)
Anthony Barnett (UK)
Augusto Roa Bastos (Paraguay)
Adolfo Bioy Casares (Argentina)
Bei Dao (China)
Mongo Beti (Cameroon)
Anna Bikont (Poland)
Andrei Bitov (USSR)
Breyten Breytenbach (South Africa/France)
Joseph Brodsky (USA/USSR)
Bill Buford (USA)
A S Byatt (UK)
Liz Calder (UK)
June Callwood (Canada)
Ian Chapman (UK)
Frank Chipasula (Malawi)
J M Coetzee (South Africa)
Catherine Cookson (UK)
Peter Curman (Sweden)
Adel Darwish (Egypt)
Louise Dennys (Canada)
Margaret Drabble (UK)
Duoduo (China)
Ahmad Ebrahimi (Iran)
Kerstin Ekman (Sweden)
Buchi Emecheta (Nigeria)
Hans Magnus Enzensberger (FRG)
Matthew Evans (UK)
Gavin Ewart (UK)
Moris Farhi (UK/Turkey)
Timothy Findley (Canada)
Agneta Fleijel (Sweden)
John Fowles (UK)
Antonia Fraser (UK)
Carlos Fuentes (Mexico)
David Gadsby (UK)
Osama el Ghazouli (Egypt)
Graeme Gibson (Canada)
Allen Ginsberg (USA)
William Golding (UK)
Eduard Goldstuecker (UK/Czech)
Nadine Gordimer (South Africa)
David Gothard (UK)
Gnter Grass (FRG)
David Grossman (Israel)
Jiri Grusa (FRG/Czech)
Jean Claude Guillebaud (France)
Abdul Razaq Gurnah (Tanzania)
Lars Gyllensten (Sweden)
Ronald Harwood (UK)
Shereif Hattatah (Egypt)
Václav Havel (Czech)
Seamus Heaney (Ireland)
James Herriot (UK)
Judith Herzberg (Netherlands)
Miroslav Holub (Czech)
Christopher Hope (South Africa)
Geoffrey Hosking (UK)
Robin Hyman (UK)
Gitobu Imanyara (Kenya)
Kazuo Ishiguro (UK/Japan)
Fazil Iskander (USSR)
Iraj Jannati-Atale (Iran)
Eva Kanturková (Czech)
John B Keane (Ireland)
Nakagami Kenji (Japan)
Oe Kenzaburo (Japan)
Nasseem Khaksar (Iran)
Esmail Khoie (Iran)
Ivan Klima (Czech)
Pavel Kohout (Austria/Czech)
Jirí Kolár (France/Czech)
Georgy Konrad (Hungary)
Petr Kral (France/Czech)
Hanif Kureishi (UK/Pakistan)
Abdellatif Laâbi (Morocco)
Sonja Land (UK)
Bahauddeen Latif (UK/Bangladesh)
Jakov Lind (Austria)
Binyan Liu (USA/China)
Penelope Lively (UK)
David Lodge (UK)
Astrid Lundgren (Sweden)
Adewale Maja-Pearce (UK/Nigeria)
Ooka Makoto (Japan)
Michael Marrus (Canada)
Tom Maschler (UK)
Bryan MacMahon (Ireland)
Larry McMurtry (USA)
Adam Michnik (Poland)
Arthur Miller (USA)
Ooba Minako (Japan)
Toni Morrison (USA)
Daniel Moyano (Argentina)
Esmail Noori-Al-La (Iran)
Edna O'Brien (Ireland)
Ben Okri (Nigeria)
Odia Ofeimun (Nigeria)
Kole Omotoso (Nigeria)
Michael Ondaatje (Canada)
Juan Carlos Onetti (Uruguay)
Baker Ouidah (UK/West Bank)
Peter Owen (UK)
Parviz Owsia (Iran)
Nasser Pakdaman (Iran)
Frantisek Pavlícek (Czech)
Harold Pinter (UK)
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Yevgeny Yevtushenko (USSR)
Wim Zaal (Netherlands)
Philip Ziegler (UK)

Over 14,000 people from all walks of life endorsed the original World Statement of the 2nd March 1989.

This Statement is being carried by newspapers worldwide including:

Aftonbladet (Sweden); *Dagbladet* (Norway); *Dagens Nyheter* (Sweden); *Der Standard* (Austria); *L'Espresso* (Italy); *Expressen* (Sweden); *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Poland); *The Guardian* (UK); *Helsingin Sanomat* (Finland); *Harper's* (USA); *Independent* (UK); *Indian Express* (India); *Lidove Noviny* (Czechoslovakia); *New Statesman & Society* (UK); *Profil* (Austria); *Publishers Weekly* (USA); *Scotsman* (UK); *Sunday Correspondent* (UK); *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* (Sweden); *El Tiempo* (Colombia); *Times Literary Supplement* (UK); *Tribune* (UK).

Organisations constituting the **International Committee for the Defence of Salman Rushdie and his Publishers** (Chairperson: Frances D'Souza, ARTICLE 19) include:

ACTT, ARTICLE 19, Arts Council of Great Britain, Association of Authors' Agents, Black Voices in Support of Salman Rushdie and "The Satanic Verses", Booksellers Association of Great Britain and Ireland, Book Trust, Charter 88, English Centre of International PEN, Independent Publishers Guild, Index on Censorship, International Booksellers' Federation, International Press Institute, Islington Friends of Salman Rushdie, Liberty - NCCL, Library Association, National Campaign for the Arts, National Union of Journalists, New Statesman and Society, Poets International, Publishers Association, Society of Authors, Tara Arts Group/Black Theatre Forum, Theatre Writers Union, Writers Guild of Great Britain.

The following have endorsed the above statement:
Norwegian Writers' Union, Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers' Association, I G Autoren (Austria).

International Salman Rushdie Committee
Address: P.O. Box 49, London SE1 1LX, U.K.

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Contributors
Kathy Acker is a novelist. Her forthcoming book *In Memoriam to Identity* is out in May. Carole Angier is a writer, currently completing her critical biography of Jean Rhys. Rosalind Brunt is director of the Centre for Popular Culture at Sheffield Polytechnic. Alexander Cockburn is author of *Corruptions of Empire* and co-author of *The Fate of the Forest*. Stephen Daniels teaches in the geography department of the University of Nottingham, is co-editor of *The Iconography of Landscape* and currently writing a book entitled *Landscape and National Identity*. Martyn Harris writes the *Daily Telegraph*'s "Odd Man out" column; his first novel was *Do It Again*. Shaun Johnson is Political Editor for the *Weekly Mail*, Johannesburg. Douglas Kennedy is the author of *In God's Country: travels in the Bible Belt, USA*. John Lloyd is East European editor for the *Financial Times*. Jeremy Seabrook is a journalist and writer whose latest book, *The Myth of the Market*, is due out shortly. Aafke Stenhuis, the interviewer of Christa Wolf, is editor of the weekly *De Groene Amsterdamer*, and author of a forthcoming book of interviews with the world's greatest writers. Nicholas Tucker lectures in child psychology at Sussex University and writes about children's literature. John Yandell is a teacher at Stephen Green School.

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3113 Set by Russell Lucas
Any children's classic rewritten in the muscled vernacular of the *Sun*.

Report by Ms de Meaner
Yes, I'm back at the helm. And for some time, I think. I hope no one was fooled by Tom's report last week, in which heavy hints about Largactil and my incarceration in a sanatorium in Tooting were spattered with a maniacal lack of self control. Overweening ambition is an unfortunate trait in a man. I do, of course, overlook it when confronted by an excess of talent and intellect.

Some of you did rather well this week. Your familiarity with "the muscled vernacular of the *Sun*" did you credit! D M Stobbs, M E Ault and D A Prince (don't you *have* first names?) get hon menshes. The winners get the glory and a tenner each.

Fourteen-year-old Huckleberry Finn must have been listening to the Pink Floyd when he decided he "didn't want no education". He certainly wasn't listening to his teachers and his widowed father.

In a week-long **RAMPAGE** this mid-western brat:

- **RAN AWAY** from his home and school
- **SHACKED UP** with an older black man
- **STOLE** valuable property
- **ENDANGERED** river traffic on the Mississippi
- **LIED** repeatedly
- **DRESSED UP** in girls' clothes
- **VOWED** he would "go to hell"
- **PLAYED BONDAGE GAMES** with another boy
- **SHOWED INDIFFERENCE** to his father's death
- **GOT INVOLVED** in a gun battle
- **RAN AWAY** again

While anxious residents of his home town waited up for news, "Huck" went on a spree with his kinky new friends. Along the trail of mischief, lasting hundreds of miles, law-abiding citizens were hit by a tide of **DECEIT** and **DESTRUCTION**.

"I don't know how he can do this to us," mourned one relative. Huck wasn't around to answer. Showing no remorse, he had made an eat-my-dust exit. His last word? "They ain't gonna civilise me!" His **ORGY** of permissive **VANDALISM** over, he became invisible. But many are saying we haven't heard the last of this **DRUG-CRAZED** young savage.

Basil Ransome-Davies

SLEW BEARS: ACQUITTED

Loony animal-lovers were flabbergasted by a judge's decision. They had clamoured for heavy penalties for brave Harry Woodman (45).

Harry, a Forestry Commission worker, used his axe to slay three crazed bears who were chasing his young daughter.

"IT WAS THEM OR US" he told SUN reporters yesterday.

Judge Tickles, summing-up, said: "No doubt Miss Woodman acted unwisely but nothing could excuse the animals' inhuman conduct."

Petite, blonde teenager Goldilocks Woodman trembled as she described her fearful ordeal at Bears Cottage. "The cottage was deserted and I suppose I shouldn't have gone in but I was so thirsty," she said, "and I was so tired I naturally fell asleep."

The sleeping Goldilocks was rudely awakened when the bears roared into the bedroom. **ONE OF THEM PULLED AWAY THE EIDERDOWN** and when the terrified girl saw the great, hairy brutes looming over her she had only one thought, to escape.

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE

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Her father took up the story. "Luckily," he said, "I was working nearby and heard Goldie scream as she jumped from the window and ran into the forest. When I saw the bears in hot pursuit I ran to save her. **I ONLY DID WHAT ANY DAD WOULD HAVE DONE.**"

John Stanley

WORRA GIRL!

The Bear Family returned on Wednesday night to their quiet suburban home which had been WRECKED by a sixteen-year-old busty blonde bimbette's mad SEX ROMP through their house.

"Daddy" Bear (47) was **SHOCKED** by the state of his house: "It was ****ing terrible! She'd **RAMPAGED** about the place, **SCOFFING** our food, sitting on our chairs—she even ate our young'un's breakfast!"

Ms Locks is known to her neighbours as a **SADISTIC** child-hater and has a previous conviction for lollypop-snatching with violence.

After **DESTROYING** the ground floor Ms Locks found her way to the bedroom.

"She was after one thing," said Mrs Bear (38).

"Baby" Bear (12) found the naughty nymphette **IN HIS BED** wearing a **MICRO**-skirt and a **LOW-CUT** top revealing 38DD boobs!

"She was asking for it," Mr Bear told police.

The underage stunner, Ms "Goldy" Locks, has since been offered a multi-megabucks modelling deal (see page 3)—we'd never kick you out of our bed, Goldy!

Louise Bridget White

JACK'S BEEN LUCKY

New millionaire Jack's mother hit the ROOF when her son began his rise to riches.

Standing outside her new luxury home today she said. "When he said what he'd done you could've knocked me down with a feather. I clocked him one on the spot."

Jack had swapped the family cow for some **MAGIC** beans.

"I couldn't believe he'd been so daft," she said. "I called him all sorts of things. Then when he said he was going to plant the beans I told him to plant himself with them."

Scientists are still trying to puzzle out how Jack's beans grew so fast and so high. Jack doesn't know either. Or if he does he's not telling. And he's keeping it a secret where he got the beans from.

"Still, the lad was right," said his mother. "This lot proves it."

Outside their new home stand three **LATEST MODEL ROLLS**.

Jack's mother said it wasn't true that the police want to see Jack about the death of a giant. "What happened between my son and this giant is nothing to do with them," she said, "These tales are put about by people who're just **JEALOUS**."

Jack and his mother are planning to live happily ever after.

● Tomorrow in the SUN: Jack Killed My Boyfriend. Giantess reveals all.

J Timson

ALICE IN ACIDLAND

YOUNG ALICE continues to spill the dirt on MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY with tales of poisoning, animal abuse, intellectual games, torture and execution.

Scotland Yard officers were last night still investigating the weird and fantastic stories of Alice—the pretty girl found wandering drug-crazed on Hampstead Heath two days ago.

A Yard spokesman said it was "too early to tell" whether these stories might just be the surface **SCUM** in a **POT** of vice. Sources close to the Yard suggest Alice's experience is connected to a variation on the "acid house" cult.

HEADCASE

Well-to-do headcase Alice was lazing on a river bank with her swotty sister when her ordeal began. She claims she "heard" a white bunny bounce by muttering to itself.

When asked why her sis could not vouch for this story, Alice apparently replied, "Her nose is permanently so far into a book she'd never even notice if **JASON DONOVAN** walked by starkers. In fact she didn't notice when he went by after the rabbit."

MAD HATTER

The Yard's only lead—apart from the royal connection—is Alice's constant rambling about the Mad Hatter. This legendary **DRUG DEALER** is known to use tea parties as a front for his real business and imports his stuff in consignments of mock turtle soup.

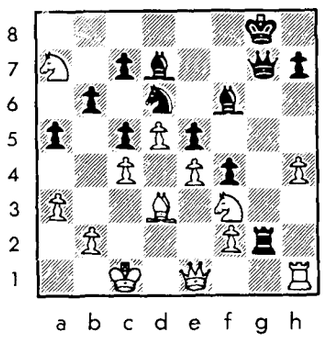
The palace's comment was, "Off with his head!" The SUN says that's too good for him.

Iain Halliday

No 3116 Set by Martin Fagg

It seems to be almost obligatory for those convicted or defeated in the courts to claim "a moral victory". Up to 150 words, please, of such a "moral victory" claim from any notorious legal loser, whether criminal or civil. Entries to be in by 8 March.

CHESS



The Wijk aan Zee tournament has been one of the strongest annual fixtures in western Europe for as long as I can remember. Over the years its proximity to the Hastings congress has been a source of headaches and nervous stress for the Hastings organisers. Playing in both events makes for a tight schedule, so after Hastings had sent an invitation to a leading GM there was always a strong probability of receiving a reply along the lines "Sorry—I'm playing at Wijk". An appended explanation—"the money and facilities are better, you know"—would only make the communication more galling. Nowadays even Wijk aan Zee cannot match the strength and magnificence of the World Cup events, but it is still a great tournament to win. This year John Nunn signalled a return to his best form by winning Wijk with 8 out of 13.

When Nunn is on song nobody plays more gracefully or attractively. So it is no surprise that he also scooped the brilliancy prize. The diagram shows the beauty spot, after White's 28th in Piket-Nunn. Looking the position over, it is by no means obvious that Black has the advantage. He is pressing down the g- file, but White stands ready to repel the invaders with Bd3-f1. Indeed, if White could only arrange an exchange of the light-squared bishops the Na7 would leap into c6 and the game would turn into another strategic disaster for the King's Indian's problem piece, that "bad" black-squared bishop. And of course Black can't play 28...Qg4 because then 29 Bf1 would trap the Black Rook.

In spite of this Nunn did play **28...Qg4!** and after **29 Bf1 Qxf3 30 Bxg2 Qxg2 31 Rg1 f3** the point became clear. Black gets a monster passed pawn on g2. **32 Nb5 Nxb5 33 Rxg2+ fxg2 34 cxb5 Bxb5 35 Qg1 Bf1** If the Queen is to maintain the blockade on g1, White must now play 36 h5 since otherwise Black forces the game with Bxh4–g5–f4 followed by the advance of the h-pawn to h2. But after 36 h5 Bg5+ 37 Kd1 Bf4 38 f3 Kg7 White is comically helpless since the Queen can never move without allowing ...Bh2. So Black just plays... Kh6xh5 and trundles the h-pawn through. **36 Qh2 Bxh4 37 Qxh4 g1=Q** After allowing the g-pawn to promote Piket gets a few checks, but that's all. **38 Qd8+ Kg7 39 Qxc7+ Kh6 40 Qxb6+ Kh5 41 b4 Bd3+ 42 Kd2 Qxf2+ 0–1** 43 Kxd3 c4+ is curtains. After this game don't let a vulgar Freudian get away with that tosh about chessplayers getting an Oedipal kick out of killing the King. It's much more enjoyable to see the bossy Queen humiliated like this, isn't it?

Nunn won at Wijk aan Zee, so he was on form. Korchnoi and Short finished behind him with 50% scores, so they were off form. Or so we are inclined to think. But it's a curious, counterfactual business this idea of form, all founded on presuppositions about what a normal or fitting result would be—presuppositions that would probably look pretty dubious if they were brought into the open. For example, the standard story about the Alekhine-Euwe matches is that in 1935 Alekhine was suffering from complacency and alcohol, which was why Euwe was able to defeat him. But try thinking about it the other way round. Attribute Alekhine's success in regaining the championship to a decline in Euwe's form. If Euwe had only been able to play as he had done two years before, he would have seen off the old champion. It's a defensible view, but few care to defend it because of the influence of reputation.

Yet if perceptions of form rest on reputation, they rest on a thin reed. Consider the chess scene one hundred years ago. Who were the great masters in 1890? Steinitz, Tarrasch, Chigorin—and Isidor Gunsberg. Isidor Gunsberg—not a name you can do much conjuring with these days. But in early 1890, having established himself as the leading English player, he fought a tremendous *slugfest* of a drawn match with Chigorin. Then at the end of the year he challenged Steinitz for the world title. In the end he lost the match 8 –10. But the situation must have looked very promising to Gunsberg after this game, which gave him a 3–2 lead:

Steinitz – Gunsberg, 5th Match Game, New York 1890

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 This move used to be given an exclamation mark, but its value is not so clear if White just plays 4 Bxc4 and accepts an isolated d-pawn. Steinitz, however, likes his King to go walkabout. **4 dxe5? Qxd1+ 5 Kxd1 Nc6 6 Bxc4 Nxe5 7 Bb5+ c6 8 Be2 Be6 9 Nc3 0–0–0+ 10 Kc2 Nf6 11 Nf3 Neg4 12 Rf1 Bf5+ 13 Kb3 Nd7! 14 e4 Nc5+ 15 Kc2 Nxe4 16 Nh4 Nxc3+ 17 Kxc3 Be6 18 f4 Nf6 19 f5 Bd5 20 g4 Be7 21 Kc2 Be4+ 22 Kb3 Nd7** An amusing echo of move 13 and absolutely decisive. **23 g5 f6 24 Bg4 Nc5+ 25 Ka3 Rd3+ 0–1**

Unfortunately, Gunsberg went into a long decline after losing the match. Some have attributed this to a chronic illness. But he did a lot of writing on the game (columns in the *Daily Telegraph* and *Morning Post*), and I have a nasty suspicion that may be really bad for one's form...

George Botterill

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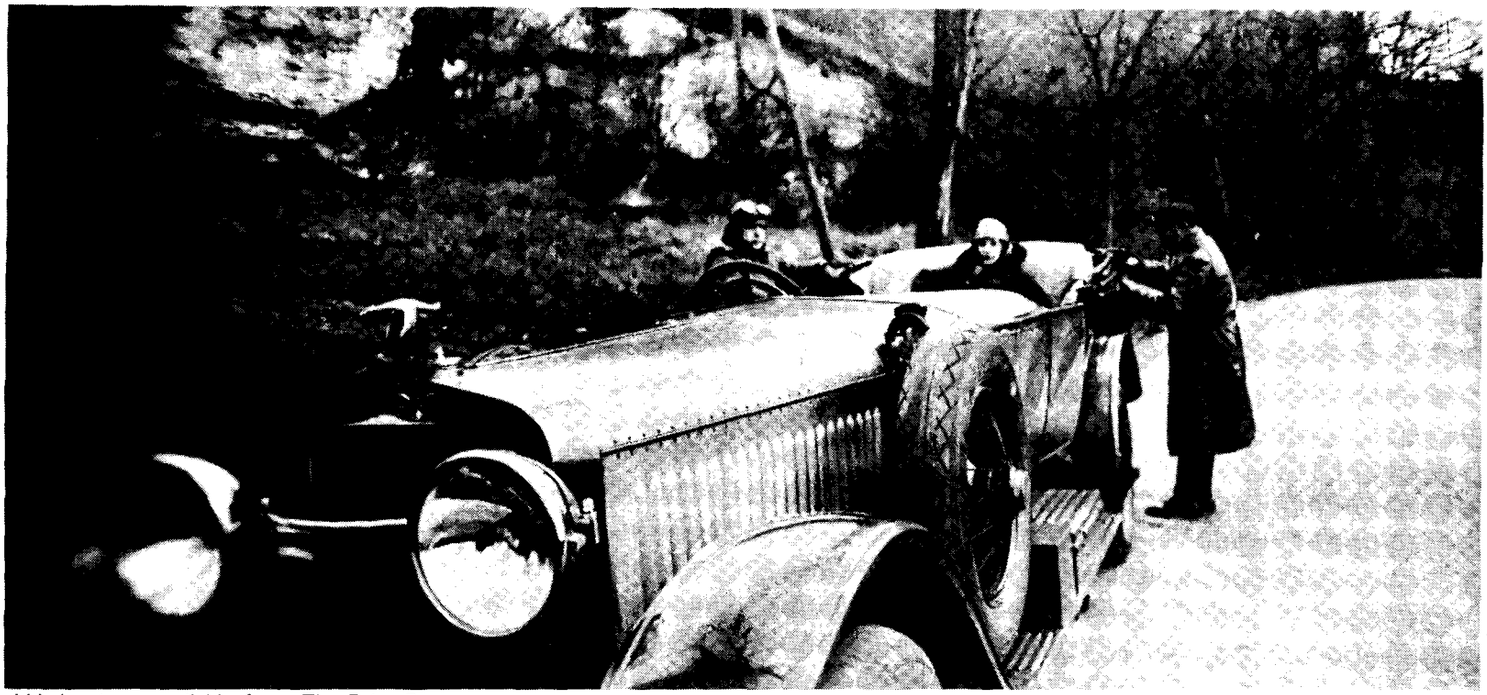

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